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THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT PALESTINE

IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C.

In the Light of Archæology and the Inscriptions

By

STANLEY A. COOK, M.A.

EX-FELLOW, AND LECTURER IN HEBREW AND SYRIAC, GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AUTHOR OF 'A GLOSSARY OF THE ARAMAIC INSCRIPTIONS,' 'THE LAWS OF MOSES AND THE CODE OF ḤAMMURABI,' 'CRITICAL NOTES ON OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY,' ETC.

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PREFACE

THE following pages deal with the religion of Ancient Palestine, more particularly in the latter half of the Second Millennium, B.C. They touch upon the problem of the rise and development of Israelite religion; a problem, however, which does not lie within the scope of the present sketch (pp. 4, 114 *sq.*). The Amarna tablets, Egyptian records, and the results of recent excavation form the foundation, and the available material has been interpreted in the light of comparative religion. The aim has been to furnish a fairly self-contained description of the general religious conditions from external or non-biblical sources, and this method has been adopted partly on account of the conflicting opinions which prevail among those who have investigated the theology of the Old Testament in its relation to modern research. Every effort has been made to present the evidence accurately and fairly; although lack of space has prevented discussion of the more interesting features of the old Palestinian religion and of the various secondary problems which arose from time to time.

Some difficulty has been caused by the absence of any more or less comprehensive treatment of the subject; although, from the list of authorities at the end it will be seen that the most important sources have only quite recently become generally accessible. These, and the few additional bibliographical references given in the footnotes are far from indicating the great indebtedness of the present writer to the works of Oriental scholars and of those who have dealt with comparative religion. Special acknowledgements are due to Mr. F. Ll. Griffith, M.A., Reader in Egyptology, University of Oxford; to the Rev. C. H. W. Johns, M.A., Lecturer in Assyriology, Queen's College, Cambridge, and King's College, London; and to Mr. R. A. S. Macalister, M.A., F.S.A., Director of the Palestine Exploration Fund's excavations at Gezer. These gentlemen enhanced their kindness by reading an early proof, and by contributing valuable suggestions and criticisms. But the responsibility for all errors of statement and opinion rests with the present writer.

STANLEY A. COOK.

July 1908.

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THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT PALESTINE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The Subject. — By the Religion of Ancient Palestine is meant that of the Semitic land upon which was planted the ethical monotheism of Judaism. The subject is neither the growth of Old Testament theology, nor the religious environment of the Israelite teachers: it anticipates by several centuries the first of the great prophets whose writings have survived, and it takes its stand in the second millennium B.C., and more especially in its latter half. It deals with the internal and external religious features which were capable of being shaped into the forms with which every one is familiar, and our Palestine is that of the Patriarchs, of Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, an old land which modern research has placed in a new light.

Successive discoveries of contemporary histori-

cal and archæological material have made it impossible to ignore either the geographical position of Palestine, which exposes it to the influence of the surrounding seats of culture, or its political history, which has constantly been controlled by external circumstances. Although Palestine reappears as only a small fraction of the area dominated by the ancient empires of Egypt and Western Asia, the uniqueness of its experiences can be more vividly realised. If it is found to share many forms of religious belief and custom with its neighbours, one is better able to sever the features which were by no means the exclusive possession of Israel from those which were due to specific influences shaping them to definite ends, and the importance of the little land in the history of humanity can thereby be more truly and permanently estimated.

Method.—Although Palestine was the land of Judaism and of Christianity, and has subsequently been controlled by Mohammedanism, it has preserved common related elements of belief, which have formed, as it were, part of the unconscious inheritance of successive generations. They have not been ousted by those positive religions which traced their origin to deliberate and epoch-making

innovators, and they survive to-day as precious relics for the study of the past. Indeed, the *comparative method*, which investigates points of resemblance and difference among widely-severed peoples, can avail itself in our case of Oriental conservatism, and may range over a single but remarkably extensive field. From the archæology and inscriptions of Ancient Babylonia to Punic Carthage, from the Old Testament to the writings of Rabbinical Judaism, from classical, Syrian, and Arabian authors to the observations of mediæval and modern travellers, one may accumulate a store of evidence which is mutually illustrative or supplementary. But it would be incorrect to assume that every modern belief or rite in Palestine, for example, necessarily represents the old religion: there have been reversion and retrogression; some old practices have disappeared, others have been modified or have received a new interpretation. This warning is necessary, because one must be able to trace the paths traversed by the several rites and beliefs which have been arrested, before the religion of any age can be placed in its proper historical perspective. Unfortunately the sources do not permit us to do this for our period. The Old Testament, it is true, covers this period, and its writers frequently

condemn the worship which they regard as contrary to that of their national God. But the Old Testament brings with it many serious problems, and, for several reasons, it is preferable to approach the subject from external and contemporary evidence. Although its incompleteness has naturally restricted our treatment, the aim has been to describe, in as self-contained a form as possible, the general religious conditions to which this evidence points, and to indicate rather more incidentally its bearing upon the numerous questions which are outside the scope of the following pages.

Survey of Period and Sources.—Many different elements must have coalesced in the history of Palestinian culture from the days of the early palæolithic and neolithic inhabitants. It is with no rudimentary people that we are concerned, but with one acquainted with bronze and exposed to the surrounding civilisations. The First Babylonian Dynasty, not to ascend further, brings with it evidence for relations between Babylonia and the Mediterranean coast-lands, and intercourse between Egypt and Palestine dates from before the invasion of the Hyksos.[1] With the expulsion of

[1] For approximate dates, see the Chronological Table.

these invaders (about 1580 B.C.), the monarchs of Egypt enter upon their great campaigns in Western Asia, and Palestine comes before us in the clear light of history. The Egyptian records of the Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties furnish valuable information on the history of our period. Babylonia and Assyria lie in the background, and the rival parties are the kingdom of the Nile and the non-Semitic peoples of North Syria and Asia Minor ('Hittites') whose influence can probably be traced as far south as Jerusalem. Under Thutmose III. (fifteenth century) Egypt became the queen of the known world and the meeting-place of its trade and culture. But the northern peoples only awaited their opportunity, and fresh campaigns were necessary before Amenhotep III. (about 1400 B.C.) again secured the supremacy of Egypt. His successor, the idealist Amenhotep IV. (or Ikhnaton), is renowned for his temporary religious reform, and, at a time when Egypt's king was almost universally recognised, he established in Egypt what was practically a universal god. Meanwhile, amid internal confusion in Egypt, Hittites pressed downwards from Asia Minor, seriously weakening the earlier Hittite kingdom of Mitanni (North Syria and Mesopotamia). The cuneiform tablets discovered in 1887

at El-Amarna in Middle Egypt contain a portion of the diplomatic correspondence between Western Asia (from Babylonia to Cyprus) and the two Amenhoteps, and a few tablets in the same script and of about the same age have since been unearthed at Lachish and Taanach. It is at this age that we meet with the restless Khabiri, a name which suggests a connection with that of the 'Hebrews.' The progress of this later Hittite invasion cannot be clearly traced; at all events, Sety I. (Sethos, about 1320 B.C.) was obliged to recommence the work of his predecessors, but recovered little more than Palestine. Ramses II., after much fighting, was able to conclude a treaty with the Hittites (about 1290), the Egyptian version of which is now being supplemented by the Hittite records of the proceedings. Nevertheless, his successor, Merneptah, claims conquests extending from Gezer to the Hittites, and among those who 'salaamed' (*lit.* said 'peace') he includes the people (or tribe) Israel.

The active intercourse with the Aegean Isles during this age can be traced from Asia Minor to Egypt (notably at El-Amarna), and movements in the Levant had accompanied the pressure southwards from Asia Minor in the time of the Amenhoteps. A similar combination was defeated by

Ramses III. (about 1200); among its constituents the Philistines may doubtless be recognised. But Egypt, now in the Twentieth Dynasty, was fast losing its old strength, and the internal history of Palestine is far from clear. Apart from the sudden extension of the Assyrian empire to the Mediterranean under Tiglath-pileser I. (about 1100 B.C.), no one great power, so far as is known, could claim supremacy over the west; and our period comes to an end at a time when Palestine, according to the Israelite historians, was laying the foundation of its independent monarchy.

Palestine has always been open to the roaming tribes from Arabia and the Syrian desert, tribes characteristically opposed to the inveterate practices of settled agricultural life. Arabia, however, possessed seats of culture, though their bearing upon our period cannot yet be safely estimated. But a temple with an old-established and contemporary cult, half Egyptian and half Semitic, has been recovered by Professor Petrie at Serabit el-Khadem in the Sinaitic Peninsula, and the archaeological evidence frequently illustrates the results of the excavations in Palestine. Excavations have been undertaken at Tell el-Hesy (Lachish), at various sites in the lowlands of Judah (including Tell eṣ-Ṣāfy, perhaps Gath), at

Gezer, Taanach, and Tell el-Mutesellim (Megiddo), and, within the last few months, at Jericho. Much of the evidence can be roughly dated, and fortunately the age already illuminated by the Amarna tablets can be recognised. Its culture associates it with North Syria and Asia Minor, and reveals signs of intercourse with the Aegean Isles; but, as a whole, it is the result of a gradual development, which extends without abrupt gaps to the time of the Hebrew monarchy and beyond. Chronological dividing-lines cannot yet be drawn, and consequently the archæological evidence which illustrates the 'Amarna' age is not characteristic of that age alone.

The Land and People.—For practical purposes a distinction between Palestine and Syria is unnecessary, apart from the political results of their contiguity to Egypt and Asia Minor respectively. Egypt at the height of its power was a vast empire of unprecedented wealth and splendour, and the imported works of art or the descriptions of the spoils of war speak eloquently of the stage which material culture had reached throughout Western Asia. Even the small townships of Palestine and Syria—the average city was a small fortified site surrounded by dwellings,

sometimes with an outer wall—could furnish rich booty of suits of armour, elegant furniture, and articles of gold and silver. The pottery shows some little taste, music was enjoyed, and a great tunnel hewn out of the rock at Gezer is proof of enterprise and skill. The agricultural wealth of the land was famous. Thutmose III. found grain 'more plentiful than the sand of the shore'; and an earlier and more peaceful visitor to N. Syria, Sinuhe (about 2000 B.C.), speaks of the wine more plentiful than water, copious honey, abundance of oil, all kinds of fruits, cereals, and numberless cattle. Sinuhe was welcomed by a sheikh who gave him his eldest daughter and allowed him to choose a landed possession. Life was simpler and less civilised than in Egypt, but not without excitement. He led the tribesmen to war, raiding pastures and wells, capturing the cattle, ravaging the hostile districts. Indeed, 'lions and Asiatics' were the familiar terror of Egyptian travellers, and the turbulence of the petty chieftains, whose intrigues and rivalries swell the Amarna letters, made any combined action among themselves exceptional and transitory. We gather from these letters that foreign envoys were provided with passports or credentials addressed to the 'Kings of Canaan,' to ensure their speedy and safe passage

as they traversed the areas of the different local authorities. Such royal commissioners are already met with in the time of Sinuhe.

Egyptian monuments depict the people with a strongly marked Semitic physiognomy, and that physical resemblance to the modern native which the discovery of skeletons has since endorsed. We can mark their dark olive complexion; the men with pointed beards and with thick bushy hair, which is sometimes anointed, and the women with tresses waving loosely over their shoulders. The slender maidens were admired and sought after by the Egyptians, and later (in the Nineteenth Dynasty) we find the men in request as gardeners and artisans, and some even hold high positions in the administration of Egypt. The script and language of Babylonia were still in use in the fifteenth century, although the supremacy of that land belonged to the past; they were used in correspondence between Western Asia and Egypt, also among the Hittites, and even between the chieftains of Palestine. Apart from the tablets found at Lachish and Taanach, several were unearthed at Jericho, uninscribed and ready for use. But the native language in Palestine and Syria was one which stands in the closest relation to the classical Hebrew of the

Old Testament, and it differed only dialectically from the Moabite inscription of Mesha (about 850 B.C.), the somewhat later Hamathite record of Ben-hadad's defeat, and the Phœnician inscriptions.

The general stock of ideas, too, was wholly in accord with Semitic, or rather, Oriental thought, and the people naturally shared the paradoxical characteristics of the old Oriental world:—a simplicity and narrowness of thought, intensity, fanaticism, and even ferocity.[1] To these must be added a keen imagination, necessarily quickened by the wonderful variety of Palestinian scenery, which ranges from rugged and forbidding deserts to enchanting valleys and forests. The life of the people depended upon the soil and the agricultural wealth, and these depended upon a climate of marked contrasts, which is found in some parts (*e.g.* the lower Jordan valley) to be productive of physical and moral enervation. In a word, the land is one whose religion cannot be understood without an attentive regard to those factors which were unalterable, and to those specific external influences which were focussed upon it in the entire course of the Second Mil-

[1] See Th. Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History* (London, 1892), chap. i., 'Some Characteristics of the Semitic Race.'

lennium B.C. We touch the land at a particular period in the course of its very lengthy history; it is not the beginnings of its religion, but the stage it had reached, which concerns us.

CHAPTER II

SACRED SITES

The Sanctuary of Gezer.—Of the excavations in Palestine none have been so prolific or so fully described as those undertaken by Mr. Macalister on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund at Gezer. This ancient site lies about eighteen miles W.N.W. of Jerusalem, and, between its two knolls, on a commanding position, one of the most striking which Palestine can offer, were found the remains of a sanctuary whose history must have extended over several centuries. Gezer itself has thrown the strongest light upon the religion of the land, and a brief description of its now famous 'high-place' will form a convenient introduction to the cult and ritual of the period.

Looking eastwards we face eight rough monoliths, which stretch in a slightly concave line, about 75 feet in length, from north to south. They are erected upon a platform of stones about

8 feet wide; they vary from 5½ ft. to 10 ft. in height, and have uniformly a fairer surface on the western (front) than on the eastern side. Number 1, on the extreme right, is the largest (10 ft. 2 in. high, and 4 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft. 6 in.). Next (No. 2), stands the smallest (5 ft. 5 in. high, 1 ft. 2 in. by 1 ft. 9 in.), whose pointed top with polished spots on the surface speaks of the reverent anointing, stroking and kissing which holy stones still enjoy at the present day. No. 7, the last but one on our extreme left, is of a limestone found around Jerusalem and in other districts, but not in the neighbourhood of Gezer. Under what circumstances this stone was brought hither can only be conjectured (see p. 80). The pillar (7 ft. 3 in. high, 2 ft. 10 in. by 1 ft. 3 in.) bears upon its front surface a peculiar curved groove; No. 1, too, has a groove across the top, and four in all have hollows or cup-marks upon their surfaces. Nos. 4 and 8 are more carefully shaped than the rest, and the latter stands in a circular socket, and is flanked on either side by the stumps of two broken pillars. Yet another stone lay fallen to the south of No. 1, and there is some reason to suppose that this and the unique No. 2 belonged to the earliest stage in the history of the sanctuary. In front of Nos. 5

and 6 is a square stone block (6 ft. 1 in. by 5 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in.), with a cavity (2 ft. 10 in. by 1 ft. 11 in. by 1 ft. 4 in.); a curved groove runs along the front (the western side) of the rim. It is disputed whether this stone held some idol, stele, or pillar; or whether it was a trough for ritual ablutions similar to those which Professor Petrie recognised at Serabit el-Khadem, or whether, again, it was a sacrificial block upon which the victim was slain.

In the area behind (east of) these monoliths are entrances leading to two large underground caverns which appear to have been used originally for habitation; their maximum diameters are about 40 ft. and 28 ft., and they extend nearly the whole length of the alignment. The caverns were connected by a passage, so short that any sound in one could be distinctly heard in the other, so small and crooked, that it is easy to imagine to what use these mysterious chambers could be put. In the larger cave a jar containing the skeleton of an infant rested upon a stone, and close by were the remains of an adult. Further behind the pillars was found a bell-shaped pit containing numerous animal and human bones. In a circular structure in front of pillars Nos. 7 and 8, the bronze model of a cobra lay amid

potsherds and other débris. A little distance to the south in a bank of earth were embedded several broken human skulls, cow-teeth, etc.; the heads had evidently been severed before burial, and there was no trace of the bodies. Below the whole area, before and more particularly behind the pillars, several infants were found buried head-downwards in large jars; they were mostly new-born, and two, as also two older children, bore marks of fire. Finally, throughout the débris that had accumulated upon the floor of the sanctuary were innumerable objects typical of nature-worship, representations in low relief of the nude mother-goddess of Western Asia, and male emblems roughly made of limestone, pottery, bone, and other material.

Other Sacred Places.—Scarcely fifty yards to the south of these pillars was a rock-surface about ninety feet by eighty, covered with over eighty of the singular cup-marks or hollows which we have already observed. One little group surrounded by small standing-stones was connected by a drain which led to a subterranean cave. Here, too, was another almost concealed chamber, and the discovery of a number of bones of the swine (an animal seldom found elsewhere in Gezer) gave

weight to the suggestion that mysterious rites were practised.

Although the monoliths of Gezer do not appear to have lost their sacred character until perhaps the sixth century B.C., they were not the only place of cult in the city. Above, on the eastern hill, were the remains of an elaborate building measuring about 100 ft. by 80 ft.. Its purpose was shown by the numerous religious emblems found within its precincts. In two circular structures were the broken fragments of the bones of sheep and goats—devoid of any signs of cooking or burning. Jars containing infants had been placed at the corners of some of the chambers; and below an angle of a courtyard close by, a pit underneath the corner-stone disclosed bones and potsherds, the latter bearing upon them the skull of a young girl.

At the north-east edge of the plateau of Tell eṣ-Ṣāfy the excavations brought to light a building with monoliths; in the débris at their feet were the bones of camels, sheep and cows. At the east end of the hill of Megiddo, Dr. Schumacher found pillars with cup-marks enclosed in a small building about 30 ft. by 15 ft.; a block of stone apparently served as the sacrificial altar. Besides several amulets and small idols, at one of the

corners were jars containing the skeletons of new-born infants. The structure belonged to a great series of buildings about 230 ft. long and 147 ft. broad. At the same site also was discovered a bare rock with hollows; it was approached by a step, and an entrance led to a subterranean abode containing human and other bones. At Taanach, Dr. Sellin found a similar place of sacrifice with cavities and channel; the rock-altar had a step on the eastern side, and close by were a number of flint-knives, jars with infants (ranging up to two years of age), and the remains of an adult.

Continued excavation will no doubt throw fuller light upon the old sacred places, their varying types, and their development; even the recent discovery of a small pottery model of the façade of a shrine is suggestive. It represents an open fore-court and a door-way on either side of which is a figure seated with its hands upon its knees. The figure wears what seems to be a high-peaked cap; it is presumably human, but the nose is curiously rounded, and one recalls the quaint guardians of the temple-front found in other parts of Western Asia.

Their Persistence.—Whether the choice of a

sacred place was influenced by chance, by some peculiar natural characteristic, or by the impressiveness of the locality, nothing is more striking than its persistence. Religious practice is always conservative, and once a place has acquired a reputation for sanctity, it will retain its fame throughout political and even religious vicissitudes. The history of Gezer, for example, goes back to the neolithic age, but the religious development, to judge from the archæological evidence, is unbroken, and although there came a time when the city passed out of history, Palestine still has its sacred stones and rock-altars, buildings and tombs, caves and grottoes, whose religious history must extend over untold ages. At both Gezer and Tell eṣ-Ṣāfy a sacred tomb actually stands upon the surface of the ground quite close to the site of the old holy places.

At Serabit the caves with their porticoes had evolved by the addition of chambers, etc., into a complicated series sacred to the representative goddess of the district and to the god of the Egyptian miners. It is estimated that the cult continued for at least a thousand years. In the neighbourhood of Petra several apparent 'high-places' have been found. They are perched conspicuously to catch the rays of the morning

sun or in view of a holy shrine; and the finest of them is approached by two great pillars, 21 to 22 feet high. Although as a whole they may be ascribed to 300 B.C.—100 A.D., their altars, basins, courts, etc., probably permit us to understand the more imperfect remains of sanctuaries elsewhere.[1] But independently of these, from Sinai to North Syria an imposing amount of evidence survives in varying forms for the history of the sacred sites of antiquity. In the rock-altars of the modern land with cup-marks and occasionally with steps, with the shrine of some holy saint and an equally holy tree, sometimes also with a mysterious cave, we may see living examples of the more undeveloped sanctuaries. For a result of continued evolution, on the other hand, perhaps nothing could be more impressive than the Sakhra of the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, where, amid the associations of three thousand years of history, the bare rock, with hollows, cavities, channels, and subterranean cave, preserves the primitive features without any essential change.[2]

The Modern Places of Cult.—Notwithstanding

[1] G. Dalman, *Petra und seine Felsheiligtümer* (Leipzig, 1908).

[2] R. Kittel, *Studien zur Hebräischen Archäologie und Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1908), chap. i. Chap. ii. illustrates primitive rock-altars of Palestine and their development.

the religious and political vicissitudes of Palestine, the old centres of cult have never lost the veneration of the people, and their position in modern popular belief and ritual affords many a suggestive hint for their history in the past. Although Mohammedanism allows few sacred localities, the actual current practice, in Palestine as in Asia Minor, attaches conceptions of great sanctity to a vast number of places. The shrines and sacred buildings dotted here and there upon elevated sites form a characteristic feature of the modern land, and there is abundant testimony that they are the recipients of respect and awe far more real than that enjoyed by the more official or orthodox religion. Although they are often placed under the protection of Islam by being known as the tombs of saints, prophets, and holy sheikhs, this is merely a disguise; and although it is insisted that the holy occupants are only mediators, they are the centre of antique rites and ideas which orthodox Mohammedanism rejects. Their power is often rated above that of Allah himself. Oaths by Allah are freely taken and as freely broken, those at the local shrines rarely (if ever) fail; the coarse and painful freedom of language, even in connection with Allah, becomes restrained when the natives visit their holy place.

The religious life of the peasants is bound up with the shrines and saints. There they appeal for offspring, healing, and good harvests; there they dedicate the first-fruits, firstlings, and their children, and in their neighbourhood they prefer to be buried. No stranger may intrude heedlessly within the sacred precincts, and one may see the worshipper enter barefooted praying for permission as he carefully steps over the threshold. The saint by supernatural means is able to protect everything deposited in the vicinity of the tomb, which can thus serve as a store or treasure-house. He is supreme over a local area; he is ready even to fight for his followers against the foe; for all practical purposes he is virtually the god of the district. Some of the shrines are sacred to a woman who passes for the sister or the daughter of a saint at the same or a neighbouring locality. Even the dog has been known to have a shrine in his honour, and the animal enters into Palestinian folk-lore in a manner which this unclean beast of Mohammedanism hardly seems to deserve. As a rule the people will avoid calling the occupant of the shrine by name, and some circumlocutionary epithet is preferred: the famous sheikh, father of the lion, rain-giver, dwarf, full-moon, or (in case of

females) the lady of child-birth, the fortunate, and the like.

The shrines are the centres of story and legend which relate their origin, legitimise their persistence, or illustrate their power. In the course of ages the name of the saint who once chose to reveal himself there has varied, and the legends of earlier figures have been transferred and adjusted to names more acceptable to orthodoxy. Some of the figures have grown in importance and have thus extended their sphere of influence, and as difference of sect is found to be no hindrance to a common recognition of the power of the saint, the more famous shrines have been accepted by worshippers outside the original circle. In course of time, too, isolated figures have gained supremacy, and have superseded earlier distinct authorities, with the result that the same name will be found under a number of locally diverging types. Most conspicuous of all are St. George and the ever-youthful prophet Elijah, who have inherited numerous sacred places and their cults, in the same manner as St. George has become the successor of Apollo in the Greek isles. Similarly the Virgin Mary, in her turn, has frequently taken the place formerly held by the female deities of antiquity.

CHAPTER III

SACRED OBJECTS

THE modern holy places, under the care of some minister, dervish, or priestly family, are the scenes of periodic visits, liturgical unctions, processions, the festal display of lights, etc., and although in the course of their lengthy history there have been certain modifications, it is to them that one must look for the persisting religion which underlay the older official cults. The rocks with cup-marks and channels, the gloomy caves and grottoes, the mountain summits, the springs or fountains which still receive the offerings of worshippers, the holy trees, the sacred sacrificial stones—these form the fundamental substructure of the land's religion, and whatever be the true origin of their sanctity, they continue to be visited when superhuman aid is required.

Trees.—It is not the shrines alone which are sacred on the ground that some saint had once

revealed his presence there; there are trees (the terebinth, and more especially the oak) which are inviolable because spirits have made them their abode, or which owe their supernatural qualities to some holy being who is currently supposed to have reclined beneath them. Such trees are virtually centres of worship. Incense is burned to them, and they receive sacrifices and offerings; they are loaded with food, gifts, and (on special occasions) with lamps. They give oracles, and the sick sleep beneath their shade, confident that a supernatural messenger will prescribe for their ailments. They are decked with rags, which thus acquire wonderful properties; and the worshipper who leaves a shred as a pledge of attachment or, it may be, to transfer a malady, will take away a rag which may serve as a charm. Sacred trees were well known to early writers, and according to the Talmud there were some beneath which priests sat but did not eat of their fruit, remains of heathen sacrifice might be found there, and the Jew who sat or passed in its shade became ceremonially impure. It is unnecessary, however, to multiply examples of a feature to which the Old Testament also attests; popular belief has universally associated religious and superstitious ideas with those beneficent objects which appear

to be as much imbued with motion, animation, and feeling as man himself.

The sacred tree tends to become conventionalised and is replaced by the trunk or post. As the home of a powerful influence there is an inclination to symbolise it, and to identify it with the supernatural being, with the deity itself. The development of the image (not necessarily female) from an aniconic wooden post can be illustrated by the pillars representative of Osiris, by the head of Hathor of Byblos (p. 75 *sq.*) upon a pillar in Egypt (Nineteenth Dynasty), and by the votive tablets at Serabit bearing the head of Hathor mounted upon a pole, which stands upon a base, or is flanked by a tree on either side. Some tree-like post is evidently intended by the *ashērah* of the Old Testament, a common object at the 'high-places' during the monarchy. In this case, the relation between the tree and deity is absolute, and we shall meet with a goddess of this name (see below, p. 87).

Stones.—The inanimate stone is partly commemorative, partly representative. In Palestine we see it marked with the curious hollows which, when found upon the bare rock, served, amid a variety of purposes, for libations and for the blood

of the sacrifices. The erect pillar appears to be secondary, but dates, at least in Serabit, from before our period. The hollows upon such stones are equally adapted for offerings, although, when they are lateral, it is probable that they were smeared or anointed like the door-posts of a modern shrine. These holes are also transferred to slabs or are replaced by vessels, while the stone itself is not merely 'the place of sacrificial slaughter' (the literal meaning of 'altar' in the Old Testament), but embodies the power whose influence is invoked. It is practically a fetish, the tangible abode of the recipient of veneration. At Serabit Professor Petrie discovered before a stele a flat altar-stone which bore cavities (Twelfth Dynasty), and even in Abyssinia at Aksum have been observed great monoliths, at whose base stood stone blocks with vessels and channels. Similar combinations have been found at Carthage. Throughout, neither the stone nor the significance attached to it remains the same. The sacred stone may lose its value and be superseded, and it by no means follows that the number of pillars implies an equal number of in-dwelling beings. While the stone develops along one line as an object of cult and becomes an altar, it takes other forms when, by an easy confusion of sentiment,

it comes to represent a deity (of either sex). It is then shaped or ornamented to depict the conceptions attached to the holy occupant, and when this deity is anthropomorphic, the pillar becomes a rude image, and finally the god in human form. It is now clothed and decked with ornaments. Thus, one finds the groove along the top or the bifurcation suggestive of early steps towards the representation of the horns of an animal; or, as among the pillars at Gezer, one perceives two (Nos. 4 and 8) which assume some resemblance to a *simulacrum Priapi*.

The growing wealth of cult, the influence of novel ideas, and the transformation of the attributes of a deity make the history of the evolution of the objects of cult extremely intricate. At the same place and time they may be found in varying stages of development, and if the interpretation of the several features as they appealed to worshippers is often obscure to us, the speculations of the contemporary writers cannot always be accepted without careful inquiry.

Images and Symbols.—Thutmose III. relates that he carried off from Megiddo and the Lebanon a silver statue in beaten work; also some object [words are lost] with a head of gold,

the staff having human faces, and a royal image of ebony wrought with gold, the head of which was adorned with lapis lazuli. Although no sacred statues of Ancient Palestine have as yet come to light—if they escaped the zeal of later iconoclasts—it would seem that they were of no mean workmanship, and it may be inferred that they did not differ radically from the gods and goddesses whose outward appearance can be observed on the monuments of Western Asia. This inference is supported by the repeated discovery, in course of excavation, of representations of a goddess who was evidently the embodiment of life and fertility. A few figurines and numerous small 'Astarte-plaques,' with moulds for their manufacture, prove the prevalence of a mother-goddess and patroness of nature, essentially identical with that familiar in the old Oriental religions. The plaques, which are about 6 to 7 inches in length, offer a large variety of types from the coarsest exaggeration of sexuality to highly conventionalised forms. The goddess is generally nude, but a bronze figurine from Taanach gives her a conical head-dress and a thin robe reaching down to her ankles. The characteristic type at this city, however, depicts a striated crown, rings on neck and feet, and is

generally suggestive of Babylonian influence. Otherwise, when depicted with bracelets, necklace and lotus-flowers, she resembles the Egyptian Hathor; indeed she is often marked with the Egyptian uraeus. A specimen from Tell eṣ-Ṣāfy curiously combines an Egyptianised form of the goddess with typical Babylonian five- and six-rayed stars. Yet a fourth variety with huge and disfiguring earrings finds its parallels in North Syria and Cyprus. The occurrence and combination of elements of different origin are instructive for the culture and religion of Palestine.

This fourth type has sometimes a bird-like head, which recalls a curious example from Lachish with large ears and hooked nose or beak. A small bronze image of the goddess, which was found at Gezer, among broken lamps and pottery within the area of the pillars, gives her horns which coil downwards like those of a ram. It is through such development and modification that the horns of the great goddess could come to be regarded as the representation of a crescent moon when philosophical speculation busied itself with the heavenly bodies. The traces of animal attributes take another form in various rude and almost shapeless objects of bronze which have been interpreted, thanks to a more realistic

specimen from the Judæan Tell Zakariya, as models of an amphibious creature with human head and the tail of a fish. Here it is natural to see the famous Derceto or Atargatis, well known later as a deity of the Astarte type, and, as an illustration of the evolution of symbols, it may be added that a splendid Carthaginian sarcophagus of a priestess represents a woman of strange beauty with the lower part of the body so draped as to give it a close resemblance to a fish's tail.[1]

The manifold representations of the Palestinian 'good goddess' extend over a lengthy period, and vary in taste and nuance from the crudest of specimens to veritable artistic products of the Seleucid age. They indicate that the fundamental religious conceptions agreed with those of Western Asia as a whole, and it may be assumed that the conclusions which can be drawn from the figurines and plaques of this deity would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to others.

Among other objects which hardly belong to public cult, but were probably for household or private use, may be noticed the small idols; *e.g.* one from Megiddo in the clumsy 'snow-man'

[1] Mabel Moore, *Carthage of the Phoenicians in the Light of Modern Excavation* (London, 1905), p. 146 *sq.* and frontispiece.

technique, another from Jericho with the head of a bull. Numerous small phalli have also been unearthed. Some are roughly carved in human shape, others approximate the form of a fish. They do not necessarily belong to the cult of any male deity, but the true significance of these and other small emblems is often uncertain. As with the many small models of the heads of bull, cow, or serpent, or the two small conical stones from the temple at Serabit, each with a groove along the base, it is often difficult to distinguish the fetishes and symbols, which involve ideas of some relationship with a supernatural being, from the charms, amulets, and talismans, wherein other religious ideas are involved. The possibility that some of the objects are really toys cannot be excluded.

CHAPTER IV

SACRED RITES AND PRACTICES

General Inferences.—That the old places of cult had their duly ordained officials may be taken for granted; even the smallest of them, like those of to-day, must have had appointed attendants. The Amarna letters mention the wealthy temple of Byblos with the handmaidens of the goddess of the city, and in Merneptah's reign we hear of a man of Gaza who is described as a servant of Baal. We may be sure, also, that the rites and festivals were similar to those usually prevalent among agricultural peoples. The nature-worship of the age can be realised from a survey of the old cults of Western Asia, and from the denunciations of the Old Testament, which prove the persistence of older licentious rites. Popular religion often continues to tolerate practices which social life condemns, and the fertility of crops, cattle, and of man himself, was co-ordinated

by an uncontrollable use of analogy in which the example was set by the 'sacred' men and women of the sanctuaries (*kādēsh*; Deut. xxiii. 17, R. V. marg.). Sympathetic magic—the imitation of the cause to produce a desired effect—underlay a variety of rites among a people whose life depended upon the gifts of the soil, whose religion was a way of life. Here, however, we are restricted chiefly to some miscellaneous evidence which the excavations suggest.

The Disposal of the Dead.—Incineration or cremation had been originally practised by a people physically distinct from that among whom inhumation prevailed. The latter innovation has been ascribed to the invading Semites. Subsequently, in Carthage, cremation is found to re-enter, presumably through foreign influence; but the two practices co-exist, even in the same family, and it is probable that there, at all events, cremation was only followed in special circumstances. A large burial-cave at Gezer with a thick layer of burnt ash proves the lengthy duration of the earlier custom. The same cave was afterwards utilised by those who inhumed their dead, and thenceforth there is little evolution in the history of early Palestinian burial. No particular orienta-

tion predominates; the dead are placed upon a layer of stones, or within cists, or in pits in the floor of the caverns. Both the contracted or squatting and the outstretched attitude occur. From the story of Sinuhe (p. 9), it would seem that burial in a sheep-skin was also customary. The needs of the dead are supplied by vessels of food, which occasionally show traces of burning; drink was more important, and the large jars sometimes contain small cups for the convenience of the thirsty soul. In the case of a jug with two mammillary projections one is reminded of a type usually associated at Carthage with the burial of infants. A variety of miscellaneous objects provided for other needs: weapons, jewels, ostrich eggs, seals, scarabs, amulets, small figures in human or animal form, etc. Especially characteristic of the later tombs are the abundant deposits of lamps.

The abode of the dead being one of the centres of the religion of the living, the tomb always possesses sanctity. The internal arrangements, with platforms or hewn benches, will often suggest some burial-ritual. The cup-marks, which frequently appear near or even in the tomb itself, like those still to be seen upon Palestinian dolmens, could serve for sacrifices or libations,

or to collect the refreshing rain for the soul of the deceased. Or, again, later usage will suggest that they were planted with flowers which, like the 'Gardens of Adonis,' symbolised the mysteries of death and revival. Often, the dead are buried beneath the streets (if the narrow windings deserve that name), or within the houses, under circumstances which preclude the foundation-sacrifices to be noticed presently. This feature is scarcely accidental; it is well known elsewhere, and was probably intended to keep the spirit of the dead near its former abode, over which it could continue to exercise a benevolent influence.

Jar Burial.—It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between an ordinary burial and some sacrificial ceremony. The burial of new-born or very young infants in jars, in or near some sacred locality (p. 16 *sq.*), points very strongly to the sacrifice of the first-born to which the Old Testament bears witness (Micah vi. 7). But where the circumstances make this view less probable, the special treatment of those who died in early infancy needs consideration. In inhumation and the return of the dead to the ground we are in the midst of ideas associated

with 'mother-earth,' the begetter of all things. The burial in a contracted or squatting position might naturally represent the usual crouched posture of the individual as he sat in life-time among his fellows; it might also point to a belief in the re-birth of the soul of the dead. The jar-burials, where the infant is inserted head downwards, are more suggestive of the latter, and evidence from Africa and Asia shows that provision is sometimes made for the re-birth of still-born or very young babes on the conviction that at some future occasion they will enter again into a mother's womb. The numerous emblems of nature-worship and the mother-goddess, especially at Gezer, raise the presumption that the deities of the place were powers of fertility and generation; and, just as the shrines of saints to-day are visited by would-be mothers who hope for offspring, it is not improbable that in olden times those who had been prematurely cut off from the living were interred in sacred sites venerated by the women. This view, which has been proposed by Dr. J. G. Frazer, will not apply of course to those jar-burials where human-sacrifice is clearly recognisable.[1]

[1] *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 77 *sq.*, 82 *sq.*

Human Sacrifice.—A gruesome discovery was made in a cistern at Gezer where, together with a number of adult skeletons, lay the upper half of a young girl about sixteen years of age. Near the mouth were the decapitated heads of two girls. In another case at Gezer (described as a 'foundation deposit') the upper half of the skeleton of a youth had been placed with two adults. Perhaps we should here include the cases where only a few bones of the deceased were preserved, *e.g.* in one tomb the skull and certain other bones were missing. Vessels, also, were found containing only one or two human bones: the patella of an adult, the calvaria of a skull; but in the majority of instances they belonged to infants. Partial burial of this character has been explained on the theory of cannibalism; this practice, often based on the idea of absorbing the attributes of the deceased, has left scattered traces among the Semites. But the dismemberment of the dead (known at Susa, Egypt, and common to many savage races) admits of other explanations, whether, for example, we observe the use of bones as amulets (p. 51 *sq.*), or recall the story of the severed Osiris. In the latter, however, it may be suspected that a sacrifice for magical purposes underlies an aetiological

legend.[1] The bank of skulls south of the monoliths of Gezer (p. 16) may perhaps recall the mound (or pillar?) of heads which certain Assyrian kings erected in front of the cities they conquered (*e.g.* Ashur-naṣir-pal I.). Such a deed, like their holocaust of children after a victory, was no unmeaning ferocity; religion entered profoundly into ancient life, and every war was a 'holy war.' The horrid rites in honour of the gods who fought for their followers are to be traced in Egypt, Assyria, and the Old Testament, and even as late as 307 B.C. the Carthaginians after their defeat of Agathocles slew the choicest prisoners 'before the altar in front of the holy tent.'

The widespread custom of **Foundation Sacrifice** survives in Palestine when popular opinion requires that blood shall be shed at the inauguration of every important building, at the breaking-up of unoccupied land, or at the opening of a new well. Thus, a sheep was sacrificed at the building of a jetty for the landing of the German Emperor at Haifa in 1898. The rite is a propitiation to the *numen* of the place.

[1] J. G. Frazer, *Adonis*, etc., pp. 273 *sq.*, 321, and especially 331 *sqq.* Here one may perhaps refer to the tradition that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in half, hidden as he was in a tree (comp. also Ep. Hebrews, xi. 37).

Mohammed in his day tried to prohibit such sacrifices to the *jinn*, but the inveterate sentiment is summed up in the words of a modern native: 'every house must have its death, either man, woman, child, or animal.' The animal-victim is recognised as a substitute, and vulgar superstition still associates with the foundation of buildings some vague danger to human life —if not its loss. Traditions of human sacrifice are recorded by mediæval and older writers, and excavation has disclosed authentic examples. At Gezer the skeleton of an adult female had been placed under the corner of a house, and the bones of infants were often found in or under the walls of houses down to the later Israelite period. At Megiddo, a young girl of about fifteen was laid across a foundation-stone, and a victim at the foot of a tower in Taanach was a child scarcely in its teens. A jar with the remains of a new-born infant rested upon a platform in the Gezer crematorium, and the evidence allowed the inference that it was a dedicatory sacrifice when the cave was taken over and used for inhumation. Infants buried in jars were found, together with bowls and lamps, under the foundations in Gezer as late as the latter part of the Israelite monarchy, although a modification had already been intro-

duced in the simple deposits of lamps and bowls, usually at the corners of houses or chambers or under the jambs of doors. If the bowls represent the sacrificial offerings, the significance of the lamps is uncertain. The victim in the rite had not been burned, but probably buried alive, and it may be conjectured that the identification of life and light (familiar from the Old Testament) underlies the symbolical lamp. The modern Palestinian custom of hanging lights in shrines, etc., in cases of sickness possibly involves the same association of ideas. On the other hand, the lamps found in tombs naturally recall the widespread custom of lighting the soul on its dark journey, or of kindling a lamp in the home to enable it to retrace its steps on the anniversary. These purely burial lamps are very well known (*e.g.* in Carthage), and they survive in Palestine to the Christian age, when they are inscribed with such distinctive mottoes as 'Christ is my light,' or 'the light of Christ shines for all.'

The Importance of Sacrifice makes itself felt at every sacred site from the enormous quantities of burnt ash before the caves of Serabit to the similar accumulations upon the summit of Mount Hermon. The worshipper believes that the rite

brings him into contact with the powers who are to be nourished, invoked, or recompensed. Its prevalence vividly indicates man's dependence upon them throughout the seasons of the year and on the great occasions of life: birth, circumcision (already practised in our period), marriage and death. Underlying the sacrifice is the profound significance of blood. It is the seat of existence; it has potent virtues whether for protection, expiation, or purification; and the utmost care is taken to dispose of it according to established usage. The fat, too, has no less its living qualities, and since the oldest unguents were animal fats—modern usage is often content with butter—it is probable that anointing originally had a deeper meaning than would at first appear. Wanton bloodshed called for vengeance, and when a Babylonian king demanded that Ikhnaton should slay the Canaanites who had killed his merchants, and thus 'bring back their blood' and prevent retaliation, the inveterate blood-revenge of primitive social life finds an early illustration. But as a sacrifice, the slaughter of human victims, though perhaps not regular, was at least not exceptional, and the frightful blood-shed which the Old Testament attests emphasises the difficulties which confronted those teachers

of Israel who would disassociate their national God from an inveterate practice (Ezek. xvi. 20 *sq.*, xx. 31).

For a striking illustration of the diffusion and persistence of human sacrifice we may refer to Carthage where the distress caused by Agathocles in 310 B.C. was attributed to the wrath of the god to whom the rich had been offering purchased children instead of their own. But there is a general tendency in religion to soften crude rites, save when a particularly efficacious offering is felt necessary in the midst of some grave crisis, and of the changes in that background of cult which has survived throughout the history of Palestine, the substitution of the animal for the human victim is the most significant. Yet, as we have seen, the idea of human sacrifice has not entirely disappeared (p. 40). The animal is still recognised as a 'ransom,' and in the present rite of that name loss of human life is averted by the sacrifice of some animal, and it is explained that the sacrifice will combat and overcome the cause of the impending danger. It would be only logical, therefore, to proceed on the assumption that the greater the danger the more powerful and efficacious must be the sacrifice. Current beliefs thus

afford suggestive hints for earlier usage, and when we learn that to-day a natural death finds consolation in the thought that it may have been the ransom for another, we meet with an idea that could be put into practice: it is no great step to the ceremonies (observed in Africa) which give effect to the conviction that a man's life may be prolonged or his old age recuperated by the actual sacrifice of another human being. It is essentially the same idea when Egyptian kings, like Amenhotep II. and Ramses II. slew the prisoners of war that they themselves or their name 'might live for ever.' (On the *name*, see below, p. 60.)

Sacrificial rites were never irrational, however difficult it may be to perceive their object, and from a survey of comparative custom one can sometimes picture the scenes by which they were accompanied. It is only by such means that one can conjecturally explain the discovery near the temple-area at Gezer of animal bones, sliced, hacked, and broken into fragments, with no signs of having been cooked. One is tempted to refer to a rite practised by the Arabs of the Sinaitic desert towards the close of the fourth century A.D. The old ascete, Nilus, describes a solemn procession of chanting worshippers

who move around an altar of rude stones upon which is bound a camel. The beast is stabbed, and the leader drinks of the gushing blood. At once the assembly hack the victim to pieces, devouring it raw until the whole is consumed—the entire ceremony begins with the rise of the morning star (in whose honour it was performed) and ends with the rising sun. Was some rite of this kind practised in Palestine? It must be a matter for conjecture; the least that can be said is that the scene is not too barbaric for our land and period.

Broken Offerings, *e.g.* figurines, models, and other articles, when found deposited in tombs, have been explained in the light of comparative custom as destroyed or 'killed' to the end that their 'soul' may accompany that of the deceased. But other ideas are evidently involved when the area of the sanctuary at Serabit proved to be covered with a mass of pottery, plaques, bracelets, wands, sistra, etc., so fragmentary that no single specimen could be pieced together. At Gezer, also, although the plaques of the goddess were fairly tough, all had been broken, and apparently with intention. We may compare the modern custom of breaking pottery in fulfilment of a

vow, an interesting illustration of which was furnished by the late Professor Curtiss from Bludan on the road from Zebedany to Damascus. At a spot, familiarly known as the 'mother of pieces,' is a rock-platform with cave, shrine, sacred grove and hereditary ministers. Hither come the women to break a jar when they have gained their one wish, and it is singular to observe that the traditions which are attached to the custom include the belief that a girl, the patroness of the shrine, lies buried there. The likeness to the suggested rites at Gezer will be noticed (p. 37). But the stories do not elucidate the peculiar treatment of the offerings, and the usage finds its most probable explanation in the persuasion that things once dedicated or put to a sacred use are 'holy,' and cannot be used for ordinary purposes. We touch upon a fundamental institution embodying a series of apparently paradoxical ideas—the universal 'tabu.'

'Holy' and 'Unclean.'—The terms Holy or Sacred (comp. the Latin *sacer*) are not to be understood in the ethical or moral sense. A holy thing is one which has been set aside, dedicated, or restricted; it is charged with supernatural influence which is contagious; everything

that comes in contact with it also becomes holy. In some cases it is provided that this inconvenient sanctity may be purged; in others, the thing has to be destroyed. When the Talmud says that a Canonical Book of the Old Testament 'defiles' the hand, it means that the very sanctity of the book demands that the hand should be ceremonially purified or cleansed before touching anything else. 'Holy and unclean things,' to quote Robertson Smith, 'have this in common, that in both cases certain restrictions lie on men's use of and contact with them, and that the breach of these restrictions involves supernatural dangers. The difference between the two appears, not in their relation to man's ordinary life, but in their relation to the gods. Holy things are not free to man, because they pertain to the gods; uncleanness is shunned, according to the view taken in the higher Semitic religions, because it is hateful to the god, and therefore not to be tolerated.'

Sacred Animals, in the light of the above, are those associated with cults which might be regarded as illegitimate. An example is afforded by the pig which enters into the rites and myths of Adonis, Attis, Ninib, and Osiris. In a cavern south of the monoliths of Gezer a number of

pig-bones lay underneath a shaft which led to the cup-marked surface above (p. 16); the circumstances recall the Thesmophoria, the caves and vaults in the Greek area connected with Demeter and Proserpine, and the use of the pig in mystic rites of chthonic and agricultural deities. In Palestine and Syria the animal was used in certain exceptional sacrifices which were recognised as idolatrous (Isaiah lxv. 4; lxvi. 17), and it was an open question whether it was really polluted or holy. If, as the excavations suggest, the sacrifice of the swine dates from the earliest inhabitants of Gezer, with whom it was also a domestic animal, it is interesting to observe the persistence of its character as a proper sacrificial animal from pre-Semitic times by the side of the apparently contradictory belief that it was also unclean.

The camel bones at Tell es-Ṣafy, also, are of interest since Robertson Smith has shown that the animal (which became 'unclean' to the Israelites), though used by the Arabs for food and sacrifice, was associated with ideas of sanctity, and its flesh was forbidden to converts to Christianity. The model of a bronze cobra found in a temple-enclosure (p. 15) might be conjecturally explained, but it will suffice to remember that

serpents were and still are connected with spirits both benevolent and malevolent. The recurrence of models of the animal-world, the numerous representations upon seals of deer, gazelles, etc. (animals connected with Astarte), or the predilection for the lion upon objects discovered at Megiddo need not have any specific meaning for the religious ideas. On the other hand, the animal-like attributes which appear upon some plaques of the mother-goddess are scarcely meaningless. There is no ground for the assumption that Palestine was without the animal-deities and the deities with special sacred animals, which have left their traces in the surrounding lands, and it would be misleading to suppose that the myths and legends which have grown up around these features account for their origin. The conviction that man was made in the likeness of the gods (who are therefore anthropomorphic) implies certain conceptions of their nature, the development of which belongs to the history of religion, and in turning next to the spirit-world of Ancient Palestine it is necessary that we should be prepared to appreciate a mental outlook profoundly different from our own.

CHAPTER V

THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

Awe.—A fundamental sense of awe was felt in the presence of anything unusual or contrary to experience, and man's instinctive philosophy shaped his ideas from the suggestions of daily life, accounting for all cases of causation by assimilating them to the intentional acts of voluntary agents like himself. There was no doubt of the existence and influence of surrounding unseen powers; they must be cajoled, appeased, bribed and rewarded. Some were inevitably malevolent; with others man could enter into relations which were mutually beneficial. Even at the present day there is no clear distinction between what we should call the natural and the supernatural; a demon or a saint can appear in human or animal form; and the marvel or miracle is that which happens to lie outside the intellectual horizon of the individual. The modern phenomena can be traced back through

early sources and appear now in grosser and now in more elevated forms; even the presence of any advanced material culture, or of more spiritual conceptions of the Godhead does not annihilate that lower supernaturalism which flourishes uncontrolled among more rudimentary races. It would be unreasonable to suppose that the religion of our period was more free from imprecision than that of more progressive peoples: the whole routine of life brought the individual into constant contact with unseen agencies, and the world of spirits involved a medley of beliefs, more embarrassing to the modern inquirer who seeks to systematise them, than to the Oriental mind which has always been able and willing to accept the incredible and the contradictory.

Man's relations with the spirits whom he shuns or seeks are illustrated in magical practices; *e.g.* incantation, symbolic magic (p. 34). **Charms**, on the other hand, possess a magical virtue which is effective without interference on the part of the possessor. Many little objects of this character have been unearthed: pendants of red coral (still a prophylactic against the evil eye), beads (still supposed to possess curative properties), small articles cut out of bone (especi-

ally the heads of human femora, sawn off and perforated). Here may be included the occasional jewels (*e.g.* a silver pendant crescent)—amulets and ornaments were closely associated, and the latter continue to convey ideas which could be regarded as idolatrous (compare Gen. xxxv. 4). The representations of Egyptian gods and the 'Horus-eyes' should also be mentioned here. 'Eyes' are still on sale in the East, they are expected to be on the watch for evil influences. But the anxiety to avert evil and to procure favour need not involve an intelligent interest in the means employed, and some of the objects (when not originally possessed by Egyptian settlers) may have as much bearing upon the question of Egyptian influence upon the religion of Palestine as the use of foreign (Phœnician ?) formulæ in Egyptian magical texts.

Oracles are obtained at those places where supernatural beings have manifested themselves, or from their symbols or their human representatives. In the stone enclosures at Serabit Professor Petrie would recognise the sacred places visited by those who worked the mines and hoped for useful dreams. The value attached to visions of the night needs no telling, and when the

Egyptian king Merneptah saw in his sleep the god Ptah offering him the sword of victory, or when the god Ashur directed the Lydian Gyges to 'lay hold of the feet' of Ashurbanipal (*i.e.* place himself under his protection), we perceive among relatively advanced societies important factors in the growth of all religions. Divine advice and help could be granted by the statues of the gods: a cuneiform tablet from Taanach refers to an omen given by the finger of the goddess Ashirat, and the writer asks for the sign and its interpretation. As in the 'nodding' of the gods in Egyptian records the *modus operandi* must not be too closely examined. Some of the old caverns of Palestine were certainly used for magical or religious purposes, and when we find them connected by small and curved passages, it is not improbable that they were the scenes of oracles, theophanies, and the like (p. 15 *sq.*). As Mr. Macalister has observed, apropos of such caverns in the lowlands of Judah and at Gezer, mysterious responses and wonders could be easily contrived, and would be as convincing to the ignorant as the Miracle of the Holy Fire is to the modern Russian pilgrim in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The association of caves and other hidden resorts with the

worship of deities and oracles is well-known in other fields (*e.g.* Greece). Susa also had a god of oracles who dwelt in secret retreats, and other deities whose remote haunts were burned by Ashurbanipal when he carried them off.

The representatives of the supernatural powers include prophets, priests, and even kings; they are also the possessors of supernatural qualities, the one involved the other. Between the modern Palestinian *majnūn* ('possessed by the jinn') and *fakir*, and the prophet of old—contemptuously called 'madman'—the difference is one of degree. The frenzied utterer is capable of incalculable good or harm, and often enjoys a respect out of all keeping with his merits. His very sanctity places him in a class by himself, and he is allowed a licence which would not be tolerated in others. An early example of inspiration appears in the story of Wenamon of Egypt who visited Zakarbaal of Byblos, probably in the reign of Ramses XII. (about 1100 B.C.). Although the envoy had with him the statue of the great Egyptian god Amon, for nineteen days he received scant courtesy and was unable to obtain the desired interview. At length, as the king was sacrificing to his gods, one of his noble youths

was seized with ecstasy which lasted the whole night, and in this state he demanded that 'the messenger of Amon' be summoned (for the sequel see below, p. 74 *sq.*). Prophecy, as Dr. Frazer has shown, by means of numerous examples, is 'a phenomenon of almost world-wide occurrence,' and it is important to remember that the relations between man and the spirit-world are not to be estimated in the light of modern preconceptions. There were orthodox and unorthodox relations, legitimate and illegitimate communion, true and false representatives of the supernatural powers; distinctions were maintained although the evidence is often insufficient for us to appreciate older standpoints. Broadly speaking, it may be affirmed that the test lay in the communal aspect of religion (whether of clan, tribe, or people) which was opposed to practices which were private or independent of the official cult.

The dead, in their turn, depart into the mysterious unseen which looms so largely in the thoughts of the living, and burial and mourning rites are shaped by many different principles depending upon theories of the nature of spirits, affection for the dead, the safety of his soul, fear of malignant influences, etc. But the interpreta-

tion of the religious rites which attended every crisis in life becomes unusually difficult when the community suffer a loss, and perhaps no other study stands so much in need of careful 'comparative' treatment. Unfortunately Palestine has furnished no funerary texts, and little direct evidence; the dead 'go to their fate,' the king of Mitanni fasts on the day he hears of the death of Amenhotep III., and Zakarbaal of Byblos offers to show Wenamon the tomb where the members of a former embassy sleep (*lit.* lie, or pass the night). A people accustomed to the annual death and revival of nature might easily formulate theories of the survival of the dead, and care is accordingly taken to provide for the needs of the deceased (p. 35). But the same thoughts are not necessarily symbolised by the same rites. Thus, cremation, the earlier custom, may have been intended to sever the soul from the body, to destroy the haunting spirit, or to prevent contamination and contagion. However, the subsequent use of the Gezer crematorium by those who practised inhumation involved a continuity of thought, albeit with some adaptation and adjustment, since identical conceptions of death and the dead scarcely encircled the two distinct customs. This is instructive for the growth of

complex ideas, and the subsequent prohibition in Palestine of certain mourning rites may find a probable explanation in their association with cults which were regarded as illegitimate.

The attitude of the living towards the dead raises the problem of ancestor-worship and the relation between deified ancestors and gods. In the absence of contemporary evidence from Ancient Palestine, we may notice the inscription of King Panammu of North Syria (eighth century), where he acknowledges his indebtedness to his gods, especially Hadad, to whose honour he erects a colossal statue of the deity. The text invokes the god's blessing upon the successor to the throne, provided that the latter when he sacrifices makes mention of Panammu's soul with Hadad or prays that Panammu's soul may eat and drink with the god. Should these duties be neglected, Hadad is besought not to accept the sacrifices, to refuse his requests; and sleeplessness and other troubles are called down upon the unfilial descendant. It appears from this, therefore, that while the dead relies upon the attentions of the living, and it was necessary that his name should be kept fresh; the dead could only exert an indirect influence, and the soul or vital principle, apart from the body, could be

regarded as potent only through its companionship with the deity. This may be supplemented from Egypt in the account of the relations between Ramses II. and his dead father, Sety I. The latter is reminded of the benefits which his son had conferred upon him, his statue, and his *ka* or vital force. These he may still continue to enjoy, and, since he now has the companionship of the gods, Ramses beseeches him to influence them to grant him a long reign. The deceased king acknowledges the bread and water which had been regularly offered to him; and relates that he has become a god more beautiful than before; he now mingles with the great gods, and he declares that he has successfully interceded on his son's behalf.

The dead relied upon his descendants and upon the benevolence of future generations, and Egyptian kings (at least) hoped to partake of the food offered to the recognised deities. Religious and other works were undertaken that the 'name' might 'live.' Promises and threats were freely made to ensure due attention, and were usually respected by the living; but the frequent acts of desecration would indicate that fear of the dead was not necessarily a predominating or lasting feeling, at all events outside a man's

own family. The above-mentioned Panammu and Ramses are somewhat exceptional cases since individuals, distinguished by rank, sanctity, or even more ordinary qualifications, readily acquire distinguished positions in after-life. Moreover, Ramses, at all events, was already a god, in his life-time, in accordance with Egyptian belief, and all those who had had the advantage of being representatives of the supernatural powers scarcely lost this relative superiority. The protection afforded by famous tombs and the virtues of the dust taken from such sacred spots are recognised to the present day. The venerated shrines regularly found their justification in the traditions which encircled the illustrious occupant: to violate them was not merely an insult, it struck a blow at one of the centres of cult and prosperity. Unfortunately for the problem, by the side of the tendency to elevate an illustrious ancestor must be placed the very human and inveterate weakness of tracing for oneself a noble ancestry. Like the claim of the modern Palestinian peasant to be descended from the alleged occupant of the local shrine which he venerates, every apparent case of ancestor-worship stands in need of a critical examination. As in most problems of religion, ambiguity of terminology (viz. 'worship')

is responsible for much confusion. It must be admitted that there would be a natural inclination for every individual to regard his dead ancestor in the spirit-world as more powerful and influential than himself. If this were so even when there were recognised gods, it is obvious that allowance must be made for the crucial stages, before the deities gained that recognition, and after they had lost it.

Space prevents any adequate reference to the part which **animism** has held in the history of Palestinian religion; without a recognition of this fundamental factor in all religions much of our evidence would be unintelligible.[1] When we take the ideas which are associated with the *name*, we find that it has magical powers, its use enlists or confers protection or possession; it is the nature or essence of the thing which bears it—indeed, almost identical with it (comp. Is. xxx. 27). Hence the meaning of names is always instructive. The supposition that the child who bears an animal-name will acquire something of the quality of the animal in question (whatever be the original

[1] It must suffice to refer to works dealing with primitive religion, see E. Clodd, *Animism, the Seed of Religion* (London, 1905), A. C. Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism* (1906), in this series.

motive) preserves more than metaphor, and indicates a stage when man saw little difference between animals and himself. Even at the present day it is still believed that the soul of an ancestor can reappear in an animal (comp. p. 50). In like manner, the personal names of our period which denote kinship with a deity point to a belief in a physical relationship as natural as the conviction of the modern native when he refers to Allah in terms which imply that man is in every detail the literal image of the Almighty. A difference between human and superhuman is scarcely recognised at the present day. The women of the land continue to visit the holy sites to obtain offspring, and it is freely acknowledged that welis and spirits of the dead can be physical fathers. This absence of any clear dividing-line between natural and supernatural is inveterate. The Egyptian Pharaoh of old was both a god and the son of a god, and a record is preserved of the visit of the god Amon to queen Ahmose in the form of her husband. The halo of divinity was perhaps not so distinct as in earlier times, but in their king the people still saw the earthly likeness of the deity.

The Divinity of kings was a fundamental belief

which reveals itself in a variety of forms through Western Asia and Egypt. The inscriptions of Gudea, the code of Khammurabi, the Assyrian records and the praises of the Pharaohs reflect conceptions which are materialised now in the insignia of the kings, and now in their costume and toilet. In a Babylonian myth the royal ornaments lay before the supreme god awaiting the monarch; in Egypt the king is the god's *ka*, his first-born; chosen, created and crowned by the divine father. The kings stood in the closest relationship to the gods; they were not only the heads of the state, they were also (in early Assyria) priest-kings, and in Egypt theoretically all offerings for the living and the dead were made by the Pharaoh. All this was neither mere empty formality nor an isolated eccentricity. It is quite in accordance with the powers commonly ascribed to divine representatives, that the control of the rain and storm is held to depend upon the influence of Ramses II. with the weather-god. It is equally intelligible (from anthropological evidence) when the same king caused the gods to take up their abode in the images which had been prepared for them!

Khammurabi could declare that he carried in his bosom the people of Sumer and Akkad, and

the Pharaoh could call himself the husband of Egypt, while Egypt was 'the only daughter of Re (the sun-god) whose son sits upon the throne.' Not only was he the incarnation and the son of the deity (or of all the recognised deities), but he was the cause of the land's fruitfulness, prosperity, and protection. The Pharaoh, 'the god of all people' (as he is once called), received the adoration of his subjects, and one could sometimes believe that he was more essentially a deity than the gods themselves, were it not that the subordinate gods always maintained their hold upon the people locally. With all allowance for the difference between conventional and practical religion, the fundamental relations between land, people, ruler and the deity persisted in many related though varying forms, which are extremely interesting in any consideration of the social changes at the rise of a monarchy and after its downfall.

This digression is necessary, because, although the practical working of such beliefs as these may perplex us, the fact remains that they were shared in Palestine. The petty rulers in the Amarna letters thoroughly recognise the divine nature of the king who was a god and had the god for his father (see p. 78 *sq.*). Later, when Palestine had its

own king, the 'Lord's anointed' was almost as the deity himself (Ex. xxii. 28, cp. 2 Sam. xiv. 17); king and cult were one (Hos. iii. 4), and the king's death could be regarded as the extinction of the nation's lamp (2 Sam. xxi. 17). Not to mention other details, the Messianic ideals of the divinely-begotten son and of the ruler whose origin was of aforetime preserve the inveterate belief in the divine ancestry of rulers, an honour which in other lands continued to be conferred upon rather than claimed by them.

Recognised gods.—It is very important to find that the representatives or possessors of divine powers are the worshippers of their deity in life and his inferiors in death. The recognised gods have their definite circles of clients, and if their human representatives are subsequently worshipped or even deified, this is a not unnatural development, especially as the official deities are apt to be at the mercy of political and religious changes. The older gods can be degraded and sink to the rank of demons (from newer standpoints), but the petty deities and the lower supernatural beings are as little influenced by external vicissitudes as the lower ranks of humanity with whom they always stand in closer relationship.

Their persistence in popular belief is as typical as the descent of the more august beings, although even the latter are understood to retain an influence which those of more recent introduction have not yet acquired or are unable to exert. While the general fundamental conceptions remain virtually unchanged, they are shaped by the social and political institutions, for religious and political life formed part of the same social organism.

CHAPTER VI

THE GODS

Their vicissitudes. — The deities were not originally personifications of any one power of nature; like the secular heads of small local groups they were the supreme patrons of their little circle. They were usually nameless, but were known by an epithet, or were styled 'god' (*el*) or 'lord, owner' (*baal*), with the corresponding feminine form. Each might be distinguished by the name of its locality. The 'god' of Sidon was otherwise the 'Baal' of Sidon, the 'goddess' of Byblos was known as the 'Baalath' of the city; the Baal of Tyre was called Melkart, *i.e.* simply 'king of the city'; the proper-name of the Baal of Harran was Sin (the moon-god); the Baal of Heaven, according to Philo of Byblos, was the Sun. When Baal and El were used as generic terms, their application was perfectly intelligible locally; and when they occur in forty or more place-names, and numerous old personal names

in Palestine, it is unnecessary to suppose that they represent two distinct and definite deities. From the old Palestinian names we learn that the deity is high, great and good; he opens, builds, heals, sows, gathers; he remembers, hastens, helps, protects, blesses, etc.[1] Such conceptions would be generally true of all; the power of each was not unlimited, but it extended to all that man usually desired.

From the general resemblance subsisting between the distinct local gods it was possible to regard them as so many forms of a single god; and when groups combined and individual gods were fused, multiplicity of types ensued. The status of a local tutelary was affected when commercial intercourse widened the horizon of both the traveller and the native; and in the growth of political power and the rise of a kingship the conceptions entertained of the deity's attributes and powers were elevated. Through the extension of authority the way lay open to groups of gods who could not be fused, and equally to the superiority of one national patron deity over the rest.

[1] Apart from names whose meaning is uncertain (*e.g.* Jacobel, God supplants?), the list could be easily enlarged; a number of names of western (as opposed to the usual Babylonian) type can be gleaned from the records of the First Babylonian Dynasty.

Political or other changes led to the promotion of this or the other god, and prominent or specialised deities in superseding others acquired fresh attributes, though local divergencies were again necessarily retained. This does not complete the vicissitudes of the gods or the intricacies caused by assimilation or identification. A popular epithet or appellative could appear by the side of the proper deity as a new creation, or the deity was sub-divided on cosmical and astral theories. The female deity (whose name may be without the usual distinguishing mark of gender) could even change her sex; the specific name could also become employed as a common term for any deity, and the plural 'gods' could be applied to a single being as a collective representation of the characteristics it embodied.

Amid the intricate careers of the great names, the local deities obstinately survived in popular religious life. They have found their parallel in the welis or patrons, saints and holy sheikhs of the modern shrines (see pp. 21 *sqq.*). The modern analogy is instructive in many points of detail, particularly when we observe the vicissitudes which the occupants of the shrines have experienced. It is natural to ask for the ancient counterparts of the Allah, the supreme god in the

official religion, who, as we have said, is vague and remote in the practical religious life of the peasant of to-day. A series of well-defined historical events made him pre-eminent over all other gods and goddesses and established Mohammedanism; internal and external causes shaped the varying conceptions of his nature, and gave birth to numerous sects. All the Oriental religions have this twofold aspect: the historical circumstances which affected the vicissitudes of the deities, and the more subtle factors which have influenced forms of belief. But we have no direct information upon the rise of the general conditions in Palestine during our period, and such problems as the origin of the term El 'God' (common to all the Semitic peoples) belong to the pre-historic ages.

Their representative character.—When the gods reign like feudal princes over their principalities their sphere is limited and other districts or kingdoms belong to other gods. Residence in an alien land brought one under the influence of alien gods, whose reality was not denied, though their power could be variously estimated. At Serabit, for example, the Egyptians had combined the worship of their god Sopdu with that of the

local 'lady of turquoise,' whom they identified with their Hathor, and the caves and temples of both stood side by side. The Egyptian inscriptions there refer to 'the gods and goddesses of this land,' and an officer, probably of the Twelfth Dynasty, encourages a cult which was largely utilitarian: 'Offer ye to the mistress of heaven, appease ye Hathor; if ye do it, it will be profitable to you; if ye increase to her, it shall be well among you.' Some centuries later, we read that Ramses III., desirous of the precious treasures, sent clothes and rich presents to his 'mother' Hathor, 'lady of the turquoise.'

The relationship between countries and their respective national gods (cp. Judges xi. 24) is frequently illustrated. When Tushratta, king of Mitanni, writes to Amenhotep III., he ascribes a victory to the weather-god Teshub (if that was the native name), and trusts that his lord Teshub will never permit him to be angry with his 'brother' the king of Egypt. Similarly, he prays that the sun-god (Shamash) and the goddess Ishtar may go before his daughter and make her in accord with the king's heart.[1] On

[1] In the names in chapters vi. and vii., the more familiar Astarte is employed for Ashtart (Old Testament, Ashtoreth). Where cuneiform evidence is used the Babylonian form (*e.g.* Shamash, Ishtar) is usually retained.

the other hand, it is 'the gods,' or Teshub and Amon (of Egypt),[1] who will make the present alliance a lasting one, and his gods and those of his 'brother,' or Ishtar, 'lady of ladies,' and Amon who will guard the damsel on the journey and give her favour with the king.

Towards the close of the reign of Amenhotep III. Tushratta despatched to Egypt, Ishtar of Nineveh 'lady of lands, lady of heaven,' in pursuance to her oracle 'to the land that I love I will go.' She was doubtless sent to exercise her powers in Egypt, and Tushratta expresses the hope that the king may revere her tenfold more than on the occasion of a previous visit. He also invokes a hundred thousand years and great joy for his 'brother' and himself. There is a parallel to this in the late popular story where Ramses II. sent one of the images of Khonsu (moon-god and god of healing) to cure a Hittite princess, the sister of his queen, of an evil spirit. The god accompanied by a priest was received with all reverence, the demon was expelled and allowed to depart in peace to the place he desired, and a great feast was celebrated. Indeed, the

[1] Amon, the predominant god of Egypt, owed his rise from an obscure local deity of Thebes to the political growth of the city. He was then assimilated to Re (the solar-orb) of Heliopolis.

Hittite chief kept the useful god with him for nearly four years, when, frightened by a vision of the god flying upwards towards Egypt, he restored it to its rightful soil. The very human limitations of the deities render it necessary that some representation or emblem should be employed when their help is required.

In political Treaties and Covenants the representative gods of the respective countries are invoked as witnesses, and their curses are expected to fall upon the defaulter. It was generally felt that curses as well as blessings had a very real potency, and the thrilling denunciations at the end of Khammurabi's Code of Laws and contemporary examples from Egypt threaten desolation, hunger, thirst, flaming fire, and the avenging pursuit of the gods. Political treaties are instructive for the light they throw upon the ruling powers. In Esarhaddon's treaty with Baal, king of Tyre (677-6 B.C.), the gods of the latter are Baal-shamen (Baal of heaven), two other specified Baals, Melkart of Tyre, Eshmun and the goddess Astarte. Later, in Hannibal's covenant with Philip of Macedon, the Carthaginian gods are enumerated in two triads, then follow the gods who took part in war, and finally, sun, moon, earth,

rivers, harbours (?) and streams. But the most illuminating example is the Egyptian version of the treaty (about 1290), between Ramses II. and the Kheta (Hittites), the two great rival influences over the intervening lands. Here the representative heads of Egypt and the Kheta are respectively the sun-god Re and Sutekh (*i.e.* Set, the Egyptian equivalent of a weather- or storm-god whose native name can only be conjectured). Formerly, we learn, '[the] god prevented hostilities' between the two lands by treaty, and this new pact is made for 're-establishing the relations which Re made and Sutekh made for the land of Egypt with the land of Kheta' to prevent future warfare. The thousand gods male and female both of the Kheta and of Egypt are called to witness. Those of the former are particularly interesting, they comprise the sun-god lord of heaven, the sun-god of the city of Ernen (also called 'lord of every land'), Sutekh lord of heaven, Sutekh of Kheta, Sutekh of the city of Ernen, and the Sutekh of various specified cities, Antheret (probably Astarte) of the land of Kheta, nine gods and goddesses of certain named cities. Next come 'the queen of heaven; gods, lords of swearing; the mistress of the soil, the mistress of swearing, Teshker, the mistress of the

mountains, and the rivers of the land of Kheta,' and, finally, the gods of a North Syrian ally of Kheta. On the Egyptian side are Amon, the sun-god, Sutekh (here an Egyptian deity, see p. 83), the male and female gods of the mountains and the rivers of Egypt, of the heavens, the soil, the great sea, the wind and the storms. The treaty also bore a representation of the king of the Kheta and his queen embraced respectively by Sutekh the ruler of the heavens, and a goddess whose name is lost. To the gods of Palestine there is no reference; Palestine did not enjoy political independence.

The Influence of Egypt.—Our latest source is the Egyptian account of the visit of Wenamon to Byblos to procure cedar-wood from Lebanon for the sacred-barge of Amon-Re, King of Gods (about 1100). The human messenger took with him the divine messenger in the shape of a statue of 'Amon-of-the-Way,' reputed to confer life and health; a sacred image upon which no common eye might gaze. When at length Zakarbaal granted an interview (see p. 54), he was inclined to ignore the political supremacy of Egypt, although he appears to allow that Amon had civilised Egypt and thence all lands, and that

artisanship and teaching had come from Egypt to his place of abode. Wenamon, for his part, showed that former kings not only sold cedars to Egypt, but spent their lives sacrificing to Amon. Even the evidence of 'the journal of his fathers' did not remove the king's reluctance. But the envoy urged the claim of Amon to be lord and possessor of the sea and of Lebanon, and solemnly warned Zakarbaal: 'wish not for thyself a thing belonging to Amon-Re, yea the lion loves his own.' Ultimately the king sent the wood, and he commemorated his obedience to Amon-Re by an inscription which was likely to be profoundly beneficial. For, as the envoy observed, should Byblos be visited by Egyptians who were able to read the stele with his name (the all-essential adjunct), he would 'receive water in the West (the world of the dead where the sun-god descended nightly) like the gods who are here' (presumably at Byblos).

Although the narrative is written from an Egyptian standpoint, the conviction which is ascribed to Zakarbaal finds a parallel in the familiar story of the journey of Osiris, the founder of Egyptian civilisation, from the Delta to Byblos. Even before the Hyksos period Egyptian women named themselves after the Baalath of Byblos

whom they identified with Hathor and evidently regarded as an appropriate patroness.[1] The connection between Egypt and the port of Lebanon may have been exceptionally close, but there were Egyptian settlements at Gezer, Megiddo, and the north at an equally early age. Under the conquerors of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the daughters of the small tributaries were taken into the royal harem, and the sons were removed as hostages and safely guarded in Egypt. Some of the latter settled down, others were appointed in due course to the thrones of their fathers, after having received the necessary anointing-oil from the great king. One of the latter recalls in the Amarna letters how he had served the king in Egypt and had stood at the royal gate, and from the grave-stone of a Palestinian soldier at El-Amarna we may see how settlement upon Egyptian soil had led to the acceptance of Egyptian ideas of the other world.

Meanwhile Palestine and Syria were under the direction of Egyptian authorities, to whose presence the Amarna letters frequently allude, and one of the writers quaintly likens the solicitude of a certain official on his behalf to that of a

[1] A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, xlii. p. 109.

mother or a father. Where there were Egyptians or where princes had been in Egypt, some trace of the national religion may be expected, and it is probable that every military garrison possessed some kind of sanctuary. Moreover, Thutmose III. had dedicated three cities in the Lebanon district to Amon; later, Egyptian gods 'dwelt' in the north at Tunip. A stele, a few miles south of Tell 'Ashtarah (cp. the name Ishtar) in Bashan represents Sety I. offering a libation to Amon, and the pure Egyptian workmanship points to a strong foreign influence in the locality. Ramses II. set up a statue of his majesty in Tunip, and a city in South Lebanon was called after his name. Still descending, we read that cities were set apart for Amon-Re in the reign of Ramses III., and this king built in Canaan 'a mysterious house like the horizon of heavens which is in the sky' (*i.e.* the abode of the sun-god), with a great statue of 'Amon-of-Ramses-ruler-of-Heliopolis,' to which the natives brought tribute, 'for it was divine.'

Elsewhere, Ramses III. asserts that he built strongholds in Asia in honour of Amon, taxing them year by year to bring their offerings to the *ka* of the 'lord of gods.' Accordingly, down to the first half of the twelfth century the cult of Amon followed the extension of Egyptian

supremacy, and although the subsequent political history is obscure, the story of Wenamon would indicate that some sixty or seventy years later the prestige of the god's name was not entirely lost. Wenamon's claim corresponds to the explicit recognition (in the Amarna letters) that the land belonged to Egypt's gods; it was the natural corollary of political extension. Like Zakarbaal and his ancestors, all the tributary princes were expected to acknowledge the suzerainty of Egypt's king and his deity. To refrain from sacrificing to the conqueror's gods was one of the signs of open revolt, as we know from Assyria and Babylonia. The king identified himself with the sun, like the contemporary Hittite king Subbiluliuma and other monarchs, from Khammurabi 'the Sun of Babylonia' who 'caused light to go forth over the lands of Sumer and Akkad' to the Assyrian Shalmaneser II. Although the result is confusing, the subordinate chiefs of Palestine and Syria were accustomed to the thought. They address the king as their gods, their Sun, the son of the Sun whom the Sun loves, the Sun in heaven, the Sun of the lands, or the everlasting Sun. This deified Sun or Shamash (to retain the Babylonian form) answers to the Egyptian Re or Amon. So Abimilki (Abimelech) of Tyre writes,

'My lord is the Sun which goes up over the lands daily according to the decision of the Sun (Shamash) his gracious father.' And again, 'I have said to the Sun, the father of the king, my lord, "when shall I see the face of the king, my lord?"' Another writer ascribes his victory to the king's gods and Sun which went before his face. The chief of Megiddo, in a letter interesting for its glosses in the native language, announces his intentions should the king's gods assist him, and other writers invoke the god or gods of the king and acknowledge the might of Shamash. Nevertheless, the identification of the Egyptian and the Asiatic sun-god would not, and probably did not, prevent them from being regarded as two deities, and a private tablet at Taanach not only recognises the god Amon and the weather-god Addu, but even appears to add Shamash. It is natural to suppose from the identification of the king, the sun, and the national sun-god Amon (or Shamash) that many apparently ordinary rites had a deeper significance, whether it was the anointing of a vassal or the fasting for a dead monarch (p. 56). The custom of offering sacrifices on behalf of kings is well attested, and it is possible that the position of divine kings throws light upon the fact that

the king of Cyprus has to explain his failure to send a representative to Egypt when Amenhotep was celebrating a sacrificial feast.

The Treatment of Alien Gods depends largely upon political relations (cp. pp. 69 *sqq.*). New settlers might add the established deities of the soil to their own. A conqueror might recognise the deities of the district to which he laid claim. The gods of a defeated land were not invariably deposed, although the Assyrian kings would sometimes destroy them or present them to their own deities. Mesha king of Moab (about 850 B.C.) records that he brought before his god certain captured objects of cult, and it is possible that the pillar at Gezer which is not of local origin had a history of this kind (p. 14). The Philistines were dismayed at the 'mighty gods' which the Hebrews, in accordance with a familiar custom, took with them into battle, and, on another occasion, their own gods, left behind in their flight, were carried away by David (1 Sam. iv. 8, 2 Sam. v. 21). The mere capture of the gods was sometimes enough to lead to overtures for peace. But an Assyrian king would even repair the dilapidated captive deities, and having inscribed upon them the 'might' of his god and

the 'writing of his name' would restore them to a trusted vassal. In Palestine the petty rulers enjoyed considerable freedom provided they paid their tribute, and supported their suzerain. We do not learn that Egypt sought to amalgamate subdued peoples and make of them 'one folk' (*lit.* mouth), as was claimed by Tiglath-Pileser I. and other Assyrian kings. Nor do we find that the Egyptian king sent skilled emissaries to teach (as Sargon II. says) 'the fear of God and the king,' although, if the reference be merely to the promulgation of the official cult, this was probably the chief results also of Egypt's supremacy.

On the other hand, a Syrian prince who had recaptured his Sun-god from the Hittites besought Amenhotep III. (whom he addresses as 'Son of Shamash') to put his name upon it as his fathers had done in the past. The text is somewhat obscure, but the recognition of the Asiatic Shamash is clear, and intelligible on the identification of Shamash and Amon-Re. So, also, when the king of Byblos asserts that 'the gods, Shamash, and the Baalath' of the city had brought about the king's accession, we have to remember that the goddess had long before been identified with the Egyptian Hathor. At a later date, a stele found north of Tell 'Ashtarah depicts Ramses II.

paying homage to a deity whose crown, horn, and Semitic title prove him (or her) to be a native deity whom the king evidently respected.[1] Respect for alien gods ceases when they are found to be powerless; but Egypt was constantly troubled by her warlike Asiatics, and so far from their gods being ignored or rejected, they entered Egypt and found an extremely hospitable reception (see Chapter vii.). Asiatic conquerors in Egypt appear to have been less tolerant. The Hyksos ruled 'in ignorance of Re,' and their god (Sutekh) was planted in the land; and, later, during the brief period of anarchy when a Palestinian or Syrian chief held Egypt until his overthrow by Setnakht, the upstarts 'made the gods like men and no offerings were presented in the temples.' We may assume then that the religion of our land remained practically unchanged during Egyptian supremacy except in so far as this involved the official recognition of the Egyptian national god and his representative upon the throne.

[1] *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, xiv. p. 142, xv. p. 205. The stele, known as the 'stone of Job,' has entered into the worship of a Moslem place of prayer, and is appropriately connected with a story of the patriarch, many traditions of whom are current in this part of Hauran.

CHAPTER VII

THE PANTHEON

Until the necessary evidence comes to light it is scarcely possible to do more than collect a few notes upon some of the gods and goddesses of our period. The most important sources are from Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt; but some additional information can be gleaned from Palestinian names, allowance being made for the fact that a personal name compounded with that of a deity is not enough to prove that the bearer was its worshipper.

Asiatic Deities in Egypt date from before the age of the Hyksos invasion, as can be gathered from the history of the mixed cult at Serabit and from the introduction of Baalath of Byblos (p. 75). Apophis, a Hyksos king, has left an altar dedicated to his 'father Sutekh,' who had set all lands under his feet, and after the expulsion of the Hyksos, this foreign deity,

Egyptianised as Set (or Sutekh), became firmly established. Both SUTEKH and BAAL were regarded as essentially gods of battle, and the latter often occurs in descriptions of the prowess of the Pharaohs of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. Thus, the king is like Baal in the lands, mighty in strength, far-reaching in courage, strong-horned; he is like Sutekh great in might. He is the equal of Baal, 'his real son for ever,' and he is as Baal in his hour (*i.e.* of manifestation). When he appears upon the battlefield like Baal, his flame consumes the foe, and Amon-Re announces to Ramses III., 'I overthrow for thee every land, when they see thy majesty in strength, like my son, Baal in his wrath.' Baal is in his limbs; his roaring is like Baal in heaven, and his enemies fall down in fear of him like Baal. Baal was virtually identical with Sutekh who is represented as a foreign god and is sometimes horned (*e.g.* at Serabit). A curious scarab shows a winged Sutekh with horned cap and long streamer standing upon a lion.

Another foreigner is RESHEPH, lord of heaven, lord of eternity, or governor of the gods; he is the warrior, the god of fire and lightning (subsequently identified with Apollo). Valiant Egyptian officers are likened to him. He appears on

the Egyptian monuments with Semitic profile, and conical hat (or otherwise a fillet) from which projects the head of a gazelle; he holds a lance and shield in the left hand, and in his right a club. According to a magical text his consort was *'-t-m*, a deity who seems to be combined with Shamash in an old North Palestinian place-name, and may recur in the familiar Obed (servant of) -Edom. In Egypt Resheph also formed a triad with Min (the old harvest-deity and god of reproduction) and the goddess KADESH ('holy'). The last, whose name suggests the sacred licentious rites of Asiatic cults (p. 33 *sq.*), is called lady of heaven, mistress of the gods, the eye of Re, etc. She was assimilated to Hathor, and stands nude upon a lion with lotus flowers in her right hand and a serpent in her left; her head framed with heavy tresses of hair is sometimes surmounted by the sun-disk between two horns. Among foreign war-goddesses Egypt had ANATH, well known from Palestinian place-names. Her priesthood at Thebes is mentioned under Thutmose III., and the favourite daughter of Ramses II. was named 'daughter of Anath.' The deity is represented sitting clothed upon a throne with lance and shield in the right hand and battle-axe in the left; or holding instead the papyrus sceptre and

the emblem of life she stands erect clad in a panther-skin; her feathered crown sometimes has a pair of horns at the base. She is called lady of heaven, or of the world, daughter of the sun, mother, etc., and is often paired with Astarte.

ASTARTE found a place in several Egyptian temples. We also hear of her prophets, and a fragmentary myth apparently describes how, as daughter of Ptah, she entered the pantheon of Memphis. Here, as we learn from another text, Egyptian and foreign deities met together, and among the latter is a Baalath Ṣaphun (B. of the North?), whose male counterpart appears in Baal-Zephon near the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 2) and the equivalent Baal-Ṣapun, one of the gods of king Baal (see p. 72). The Egyptians depict Astarte with the head of a lioness, driving her quadriga over the foe; and as goddess of war she is 'mistress of horses and lady of chariots.' But that both Anath and Astarte were also dissolute goddesses is recognised in a text which ascribes their creation to Set. The prevalence of the cult of the goddess of love and war in Palestine is well known from the references in the Old Testament to Ashtoreth (an intentional perversion to suggest *bōsheth* 'shame'), from the place-names, and from the plaques which in-

dicate numerous minor local types (p. 29). In the Amarna tablets Astarte (or rather the Babylonian Ishtar) coalesces with ASHIRTA who is sometimes written in the plural (Ashrati). Like the place-names Anathoth (the Anaths) and Ashtaroth (the Astartes), the different conceptions of the goddess in all her local forms seem to be combined in one term. Ashirta appears to have been essentially the goddess of the west. In a text of the First Babylonian Dynasty she is paired with Ramman as 'bride of the king of heaven, lady of exuberance (or vigour) and splendour'; later, she is called the consort of the 'lord of the mountain,' an appellative corresponding to the Baal of Lebanon. In old Arabia she was the wife of the moon-god, and the masculine form Ashir, on cuneiform Cappadocian tablets of our period, seems to be no other than the great god Ashur himself. Her name cannot be severed from the *Ashērah*, but it is not clear whether it was transferred to or derived from the object of cult (see p. 26). The intricacy of the history of the divine-names will be understood when the Assyrian equivalent of Beth (house of) -El becomes the name of a deity, or when the plural of Ishtar is used of goddesses in general, or when Resheph (above) in Hebrew denotes a spark,

flame, or fire-bolt. But the career of the goddess of love and war is even more complicated. The phonetic equivalent of Ishtar in old Arabia was a god (so perhaps also in Moab, ninth century), and Ishtar herself appears in Assyria with a beard and is likened to the god Ashur, thus finding a later parallel in the bearded Aphrodite (Astarte, Venus) of Cyprus.

The sex of the sun-deity SHAMASH is equally confusing, for, although he was lord of heaven (p. 73), and kings of Egypt and the Hittites identified themselves with him, the deity was female in old Arabia, among earlier Hittite groups, and probably once, also, in Palestine and Syria.[1] Place-names compounded with Shemesh attest the prevalence of the deity, and around the district of Gezer lie Beth-Shemesh and the stories of Samson (sun) wherein solar elements have been recognised. Among pastoral and agricultural peoples, however, the moon is more important. To the prominence of new-moon festivals and the probable connection between the lunar body and the name Jericho we must add the moon-god SIN, in Sinai and the desert of Sin

[1] H. Winckler, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1907), No. 35, p. 53; *id.*, Amarna Tablets, No. 208, l. 22 (Knudtzon, No. 323).

in the south of Palestine, and in the north at Harran, where his worship survived to the Christian era. At Hamath, in N. Syria, about 800 B.C., Shamash and the moon-god find a place by the side of the supreme 'Baal of heaven.' Later, at Nerab near Aleppo the moon-god is associated with his wife *N-k-l* (Nin-gal 'the great lady'), Shamash, and Nusku (fire-god, messenger of Bel). Specific Assyrian influence might be expected at this date, but the consort's name appears in an Egyptian magical text, not later than the Twentieth Dynasty, as the wife of 'the high god' (here, the Sun ?).[1]

Quite as prominent as the sun was the weather-god, god of storm, lightning and thunder. Known as Teshub (p. 70), Hadad, Ramman (comp. the Biblical Rimmon), Adad, Dad, Bir, etc., the form ADDU, which was recognised as the god's 'Amorite' designation, is adopted here in preference to the more familiar Aramæan HADAD. This is supported by the spelling of the name of Rib-Addi, king of Byblos. The interchange of Baal and Addu in certain names in the Amarna letters shows that Addu could naturally be called Baal, and to the Egyptians he was apparently *the* Baal. The importance of

[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeit. f. Aeg. Spr.*, xliii. p. 97.

the weather-god in the religion of agricultural and pastoral peoples may be illustrated from one of Khammurabi's curses: 'May Adad, lord of abundance, regent of heaven and earth, my helper, deprive him (*i.e.* the disobedient) of the rain from heaven and the water-floods from the springs; may he bring his land to destruction through want and hunger; may he break loose furiously over his city and turn his land into the heap left by a storm.' The gifts of Addu preserved men from dearth and starvation; a too plenteous supply brought flood and ruin. Thus the god had a twofold aspect, and his thunder in the heavens, his fiery darts, in fact the destructive side of his character made him an appropriate war-god. This aspect of the nature-deity was especially cultivated by warlike peoples.

Babylonian and Hittite sculptures depict the god brandishing a hammer with his right hand, while the left holds up a triad of lightning-flashes or thunder-bolts. On an inscription from North Syria (eighth century) Hadad has horns, and with this agrees the association of the bull with the god. Like all predominant gods he includes a variety of attributes, and we may conjecture that the small heads of bulls unearthed by the excavations are connected with his worship (p. 32).

The inscription in question (see also p. 57) places Hadad at the head of a small pantheon with El, Resheph, R-k-b—el (steed, chariot, or charioteer of El) and Shamash. In the Amarna letters one writer calls the king of Egypt his Addu, and Abimelech of Tyre, who likens him to both Shamash and Addu, addresses him as 'he who gives his thunder in the heavens like Addu.'

Together with this combination it is to be noticed that while Khammurabi 'the Sun of Babylonia' calls himself the mighty bull who gores the enemy, old Egyptian scenes actually represent 'the strong bull' breaking down fortresses with its horns or expelling the inhabitants. The Pharaoh was symbolised by the bull, and even the Egyptian sun-god is styled 'the bull of the gods.' The animal is doubtless typical of generative force and of strength, while the union of the attributes of Shamash and Addu are intelligible since to the sun and weather man owed the necessaries of life. It is noteworthy that the two deities are prominent in the Hittite treaty, where each is called 'lord of heaven' (p. 73), and, as early as the nineteenth century, the Assyrian compound-name Shamshi-Adad indicates that they could be easily combined. The name is borne by two kings; one a 'priest-king'

of the god Ashur, the other a son of Ishme—Dagan ('D. hears').

Dagan (DAGON) has left his traces in place-names and in the ruler, 'Dagan is strong' (Amarna letters). The deity seems to have been of Assyrian or Mesopotamian rather than of Babylonian origin. It is possible that he was a corn-god. The Babylonian NEBO, the 'teacher,' can only be recovered from place-names in Judah and Moab. NINIB (native form is uncertain), both sun- and war-god, appears in the Amarna letters in two place-names (one in the vicinity of Jerusalem), and in the personal-name 'Servant of Ninib.' The swine was sacred to Ninib, as also to Tammuz and the Phœnician Adonis; but neither of the latter can be traced in our period.

SHALEM, in Jeru-salem (Uru-salim in the Amarna letters), has been identified (on the analogy of Jeru-el) with a god who is known later in Phœnicia, Assyria, and North Arabia, and who is perhaps combined with Resheph on an Egyptian stele of our period. He was perhaps identified with Ninib. The antiquity of GAD, the deity of fortune, can be assumed from place-names. In a disguised form the goddess, 'Fortune' was the guardian-deity of the cities in the Greek age, and allusion is made in the Talmud to the couch

reserved for the 'luck of the house.' A deified 'Righteousness' (*ṣedeḳ*) has been inferred from a name in the Amarna age; it would find a parallel in 'Right' and 'Integrity' the sons of the Assyrian god Shamash, and both 'Integrity' and 'Righteousness' find a place in the Phœnician cosmogony which, in spite of its late dress, preserves many old features which recur in Hebrew myths.

The Babylonian NERGAL, god of war, burning heat and pestilence, and ruler of Hades, the deity with whom was identified Saturn (and also Mars), should find a place in the pantheon. A seal from Taanach describes its owner as 'servant of Nergal' (p. 110), and the king of Cyprus reports to Egypt the desolation caused by the god's hand. Even as late as the third century B.C. we hear of a Phœnician who was his high-priest. As a solar fire-god he had in the west the name Sharrab or Sharraph with which the familiar Seraph may be identified. The god El of later Phœnician myth (the Greek Kronos; Saturn) was depicted with six-wings like the Seraphim. He was the god to whom children were sacrificed, whence the story that he had set the example by killing his own. If infants had been slain to Sharrab in Palestine, this would be in harmony with Nergal's character, and it may

be noticed that Nusku, who is sometimes associated with Nergal, was symbolised by a lamp (cp. above, p. 41). In the Old Testament the grim rites belong to Molech (properly Melek), but there are independent reasons for the view that the latter was the proper-name of the Phœnician El.[1] However this may be, the name MELEK, although really an appellative ('king'), passes over into a true proper-name; but it is not clear whether this is the case in our period where we meet with the personal names 'servant of Melek' (or, the king), 'El is Melek,' etc.

It is uncertain whether there is external evidence for the name YAHWEH (Jehovah), the national God of the Israelites. Unambiguous examples outside Palestine appear in North Syria in the eighth century in the form Yau (Yahu), which in one name interchanges with El. Cuneiform evidence for the name in the First Babylonian Dynasty has been adduced, and in the abbreviated Ya it possibly occurs in 'house of Ya,' a Palestinian town taken by Thutmose III. Further, in Akhi-yami (or, yawi), the author of a cuneiform tablet from Taanach, an identification with Akhiyah (the Biblical Ahijah) is not improbable, although other explanations are possible. While

[1] M.-J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Rel. Semitiques*, p. 107 *sq.*

other writers salute Ishtar (or Astarte)-Washur, the governor of Taanach, with: May Addu, or may the gods preserve thy life, Ahijah (?) invokes 'the lord of the gods.' In the course of his letter he asks whether there is still lamentation for the lost cities or have they been recovered, and continues: 'there is over my head some one (who is) over the cities; see, now, whether he will do good with thee; further, if he shows anger, they will be confounded, and the victory will be mighty.' It is not clear whether these words refer to the divine Pharaoh or to a deity, the supreme god whom he invokes. If the latter view be correct, it is difficult to decide whether the reference be to the Sun-god, patronised by the ruling powers (whether Egyptian or Hittite), or the great Addu who would be quite in keeping with the allusions to war and victory. Some, however, would recognise a Providence, or, from their interpretation of the writer's name, Yahweh himself. But a single tablet has little evidential value and we can merely mention the possibilities.

The preceding paragraphs touch only the fringe of an important subject—the Palestinian pantheon in and after the Amarna age. Egyptian supremacy involved the recognition of Amon-Re, but it is difficult to determine to what extent this deity

differed from the Palestinian Shamash. Excavations illustrate the result of intercourse, especially in the southern part of the land, but the numerous characteristic scarabs, and the representations of Osiris, Isis, Ptah, Sebek, Anubis, and the ever-popular Bes (with moulds), need have no significance for the gods of Palestine. They may not always be specifically Egyptian; Bes, for example, appears to be of non-Egyptian ancestry. Further, a number of the names in the Amarna letters are neither Egyptian nor Semitic, but of northern origin, and the name of the king of Jerusalem, 'servant of Khiba,' introduces a goddess of the earlier 'Hittite' peoples whose influence upon Palestine is to be inferred upon other grounds.[1]

In Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria numerous deities of varying rank were venerated by the people. Bes, himself, in spite of his subordinate position in the pantheon was a favourite among all Egyptians outside the more elevated classes. The popular beings, like the popular religious ideas, are not to be found in royal inscriptions or temple-hymns. The state and the priesthood often refused to recognise them, but they are to be found not rarely among the per-

[1] H. Winckler (*Mittheil.*, No. 35), p. 48.

sonal names of ordinary individuals. This probably holds true also of Palestine, and consequently we must not suppose that the influence of foreigners upon the *popular* cults of the land is to be ignored or that the more honourable names which we have been noticing were the sole claimants to the worship of the peasantry.[1]

[1] Comp. M. Jastrow, *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, i. p. 164 *sq.*; H. P. Smith, 'Theophorous Proper Names in the Old Testament,' in *O. T. and Semitic Studies in memory of William Rainey Harper*, i. pp. 35-64 (Chicago, 1908).

CHAPTER VIII

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT—CONCLUSION

Miscellaneous Ideas.—Although the native literature of our period consists almost entirely of the begging-letters and reports in the Amarna Tablets, yet even from the language addressed to the human representative of the Sun-God, we may gain some idea of the intellectual environment, some hints, it may be, suggestive of the religious thought of the age.[1] The Egyptian monarch is addressed not only as king of lands, king of battle but as a god (pp. 63, 78). His commands are as powerful as the Sun (Shamash) in Heaven; he is like the Sun which rises over the lands every day, and, as for the rising of the Sun in Heaven, so the writers await the words which come from his mouth. They keep the king's command day and night and acknowledge that the king will curse

[1] It need hardly be remarked that the paragraphs classifying the more interesting ideas in the letters from Palestine and Syria have been made as literal as possible.

the man who does not serve him. He who hearkens not to the word of the king, his lord, his city and house go to ruin, and his name will not be in the land for ever; but (says the writer, the king of Tyre) the servant who hearkens to his lord, his city and house flourish, and his name is unto eternity, 'for thou art the Sun which rises over me and the wall of bronze which is lifted up for me.'

The vassals do obeisance seven and seven times; they prostrate themselves upon breast and back. (Both attitudes are illustrated in the rather later tomb of Harmheb.) They call themselves the throne on which the king sits, his footstool, the dust of his feet and of the soles of his sandals. They are the ground upon which he treads, the dirt over which he walks; his yoke is upon their neck and they bear it. 'Whether we mount up to heaven or descend to earth, our head is still in your hand,' writes one, and he makes the following striking acknowledgement: 'I look here and I look there and there is no light, but I look to my lord the king and there is light; and though a brick move away from under its coping, I will not move away from under the feet of my lord.' These phrases, which were evidently popular, are used by two

other writers. A vassal thus declares his fidelity: 'I have not sinned in aught against the king my lord, I have not sinned; may the lord my king know his evil-doers.' Another seeks the way to his lord, and from his lord deserts not. A confident vassal prays the king not to take anything to heart; let not thy heart be pained, he writes. One writer asks if he is a dog that he should not obey the royal commands, and a second emphasises his remarks by a repetition of the oath 'as the king, my lord, liveth.'

The king of Byblos, who calls his city the king's faithful handmaid, complains of a deed against his city which had not been done since eternity; the dogs (*i.e.* his adversaries) act after their hearts and cause the king's cities to go up in smoke. The fields are like a wife without a husband through lack of sustenance. He himself is caught like a bird in a cage. Again, he is old and stricken with disease; the gods of Byblos are enraged, and the illness is very severe, but, he continues, 'I have opened (confessed) my sins to the gods.' He declares that since the day he received favour from the king his heart had not changed, his face is (fixed) to serve him; if the king's heart is for his city (or, elsewhere, if it is on his heart) let him send help.

The vassals write that they stretch out their hand to the king's feet, or pray that the king may extend his hand unto them. The citizens of Tunip assert: 'thy city weeps and its tears flow; there is no seizing of the hand (help) for us.' The ruler of Beirut trusts that the royal troops may shatter the heads of the king's enemies, while his servant's eyes gaze (*i.e.* with pleasure) upon the king's life. The elders of a city entreat: 'May the king our lord hearken to the words of his true servants, and give a present to his servants, while our enemies look on and eat the dust; let not the king's breath depart from us.' The king is the breath of his vassals' lives; they rejoice when it reaches them, for without it they cannot live. The thought was a common one, and in an Egyptian text the defeated Hittites are represented as saying to Ramses II. 'in praising the Good God (*i.e.* the king) "Give to us the breath that thou givest, lo, we are under thy sandals."' Equally interesting are the words of the prince of Sidon on the receipt of tidings from the king, 'my heart rejoiced, my head was uplifted and my eyes shone.'

Finally, the king of Jerusalem in his letters to his god, his Sun, protests that one has slandered him (*lit.* eaten the pieces). While other writers

disclaim guilt or sin (*khiṭu*), *i.e.* rebellion, he asserts that he has been loyal (*ṣaduḳ*) in his dealings. He acknowledges that neither his father nor his mother appointed him in his place, the king's strong arm has set him up in his father's house, he has 'put his name upon Jerusalem for ever,' therefore he cannot abandon its territory. Indeed, his recognition of Pharaoh's supremacy is unique, and in one of his communications to the king his Sun, after the usual obeisance ('at the feet of my lord, seven times and seven times I fall'), he declares that his lord 'has put his name upon the East and upon the West.'

The Underlying Identity of Thought throughout the old Oriental world shows itself alike in Egyptian texts and in Hittite tablets from Boghazkeui. The literature of Babylonia, Assyria, and often, too, of Egypt so frequently has analogies and parallels in the Old Testament, that we may assume that similar points of contact would be found, had we some of the religious writings of the Palestine of our period. Though we do not know how the Palestinian addressed his gods, the evidence whether direct or indirect partially enables us to fill the gap. Even the simplicity and poverty of Oriental pastoral life have never

been accompanied by a corresponding inferiority of expression or dearth of religious reflection. An unbiased examination of the external religious literature shows the position which the deities held in the thoughts of their groups of worshippers. Religion was quite part of life, and the same fundamental conceptions underlay the manifold social-religious systems whether tribal or monarchical. To their head each group looked for all the gifts of nature and also for protection and succour; him they were loyally prepared to sustain, and they expected a corresponding loyalty on his part.

A topical example of the identity of thought is furnished by a hymn of the monotheist Ikhnaton in honour of Aton. The deities are largely what circumstances make them; the extension of Egypt's empire extended the supremacy of the national-god, the situation encouraged the conception of a world-god. Now, this domesticated and somewhat weak monarch, holding himself aloof from politics, endeavoured to found a cult of the sun-disc which was characteristically devoid of the usual association of the sun with the destructive aspect of the storm- or weather-god. Like other individual faiths, it was stamped with a profound spirit of humanity. Ikhnaton's deity

was the sole god, beside whom there was no other; the beginning of life, the creator of 'the countries of Syria, Nubia, the land of Egypt'; the maker of all mankind diverse in speech, and of all that is upon the earth and on high. It was a despotic and ill-timed monotheism. It introduced a cult which was too far from ordinary worship, one which threatened to overthrow the old-established deities. What was probably more important was the fact that the deity had not the forceful and dominating attributes of the old sun-god. He was not a god of war, and, from the current standpoint, would be of no avail in the political storms which were beating upon the Egyptian empire in Asia. But this remarkable attempt at a reform claims attention especially because the cult was as little upon traditional and specifically Egyptian lines as was the idea of the beneficent life-giving sun whose rays were not confined to Egypt alone. As Professor Breasted has observed, the hymn is especially interesting for its similarity in thought and sequence with the late Psalm civ. There is no evidence, however, that any effort was made to spread Ikhnaton's cult over the Egyptian dominions in Western Asia, and the possibility of Asiatic influence upon the shaping of the cult cannot be altogether excluded. We quote a

few lines from Professor Breasted's translation to illustrate Ikhnaton's conceptions of the sun-god, whose worship was one of the most popular in Babylonia and Assyria, who, indeed, was regarded there not merely as an illuminator but as a supreme and righteous judge, the god of truth and justice.

'When thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven,
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.

. . . . .

When thou settest in the western horizon of heaven,
The world is in darkness like the dead.

. . . . .

Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon,
When thou shinest as Aton by day.
The darkness is banished, when thou sendest forth thy rays.

. . . . .

How manifold are all thy works,
They are hidden from before us,
O thou sole god, whose powers no other possesseth,
Thou didst create the earth according to thy desire,
While thou wast alone.

. . . . .

The world is in thy hand,
Even as thou hast made them.
When thou hast risen, they live.
When thou settest, they die.
For thou art duration, beyond thy mere limbs,
By thee man liveth,
And their eyes look upon thy beauty,
Until thou settest.'[1]

[1] See further the appreciative account of the reform by J. H. Breasted, *History of Egypt*, pp. 355-378.

The Influence of Babylonia.—The fact that Palestine used the script and language of Babylonia suggests that it shared other features of its culture. Among the Amarna Tablets were Babylonian mythological texts which had been carefully studied or used for reading-exercises in Egypt. One, the myth of Eresh-ki-gal and Nergal, narrating the descent of the latter into Hades, recalls the story of Persephone. Another, the myth of Adapa, tells how the hero who refused the food and water of life in heaven was denied the gift of immortality. It is inconceivable that Palestinian speculation did not turn to the mysteries of life and death, or that a people should acknowledge Nergal—or any other deity—without some formal beliefs. May we assume, therefore, that Palestinian thought was pre-eminently Babylonian? The question is as important for our period as for the Old Testament, and, in the absence of texts wherewith to institute a comparison, we conclude with a brief account of the bearing of the available evidence upon the problem.

The formulated beliefs, the theology, and the mythology which all races possess to some degree or other have grown up from that primitive philosophy of man which seeks to explain all that he saw about him. The old question:

'What mean ye by this service?' (Exod. xii. 26) is typical of the inquiry which ritual (and indeed all other) acts invariably demand; the danger lies in our assuming that the proffered explanations necessarily describe their origin, and in confusing the essential elements with those which are accidental and secondary. The excavations at Gezer suggest an illustration. What rites were practised in its caves or in the great tunnel which leads to the subterranean spring cannot be asserted, but there is a living tradition that the waters of the flood burst forth in the neighbourhood. Similar flood-stories can be localised elsewhere. In Hierapolis water was poured into a chasm below the sanctuary twice a year, and according to the Pseudo-Lucian it was here that the waters of Deucalion's flood were absorbed—hence the rite! But Melito reports that water was emptied into a well in the city in order to subdue a subterranean demon—evidently some earlier chthonic deity. Similar water-rites were known in Palestine and Syria as a 'descent' or *Yerīd*, and it may be presumed that an echo of the term survives in *'Ain Yerdeh* at the foot of Gezer. We do not reach the root of the matter, but we can notice the diverse explanations of the same rite (which probably originated in a charm

to procure rain), the ubiquity of certain traditions, their persistence, and the ease with which they adjust themselves. Further, it is instructive to observe how the rite has been shaped in the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles and has been dressed in accordance with specific religious beliefs (cp. Zech. xiv. 16 *sq.*).

Some archæological details may next be summarised. An altar at Taanach, with protuberances suggestive of horns, bore in bold relief winged animals with human faces, lions, a tree with a goat on either side, and a small human figure clutching a serpent. Though it may belong to the eighth or seventh century, similar scenes recur upon seals and other objects of all dates. Animals (especially of the deer or gazelle kind) are common, either alone or in conjunction with trees or men. Man-headed bulls with wings, sphinxes, and scenes of combat also appear. The ubiquitous myth of the dragon-slayer finds a parallel in the Egyptian scene of a foreign god (Sutekh) piercing the serpent with his spear, or in the later grandiose representations of the sturdy boy at Petra who grips the dragon.[1] One

[1] The former is given by F. L. Griffith, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xvi. p. 87, the latter by A. Jeremias, *Alte Test.*, etc., p. 456 *sqq.*, fig. 151.

seal shows a seven-branched tree grasped by two men with the sun and moon on one side and two stags on the other. In a second, a human figure stands before a kind of pillar which is surmounted by an eight-rayed star. A third had been impressed upon a tablet from Gezer which bore nineteen distinct objects, including sun, moon, star, serpent, fish, crab, animals, etc. Some of the signs were at once recognised as zodiacal, and less elaborate specimens from Gezer and Megiddo furnish parallels. But inscribed Babylonian boundary-stones of our period bear analogous symbols; they are the emblems of the deities whose powers are thus invoked by the inscription should the land-mark be damaged or removed. The more gods, the more powerful the charm.

Such objects with all their Babylonian associations may in certain cases have been imported or copied from foreign originals; the scenes could have been absolutely meaningless or even subject to a new interpretation. But it is as difficult to treat every apparently foreign object as contrary to Palestinian ideas, as it is to determine how sacrificial and other scenes would otherwise have been depicted. Religion found its expression in art; art was the ally of idolatry, and the later uncompromising attitude of Judaism towards

display of artistic meaning implies that the current symbolism, etc., reflected intelligible religious conceptions. But it does not follow that these conceptions were everywhere identical.

Again, when a scimitar from a tomb at Gezer resembles that which a priest holds in a sacrificial scene upon a Gezer seal, we may suppose that the seal represents a familiar Palestinian ceremony. But the same type of weapon is found in Assyria and Egypt in the age of the Nineteenth Dynasty, and it is therefore impossible to treat it or the scene as *distinctively* Palestinian. The ubiquity of the dragon-conflict, too, warns us that the same underlying motive will present itself in a great variety of external shapes, and it is interesting to find that the idea of the slayer as a *child* actually points away from Babylonia. Features which find their only parallel in the accumulation of Babylonian evidence are not inevitably of Babylonian origin. Our land was exposed to diverse influences, an illustration of which is afforded by certain seals with cuneiform characters. The owner of one is styled a servant of Nergal (see p. 93); it bears Egyptian symbols (those of life and beauty), and a scene of adoration, partly Egyptian and partly Babylonian in treatment. It has been ascribed to the First Dynasty of Babylon. Later

come the seals of the Sidonian Addumu 'beloved of the gods (?)' and his son; on one is an Egyptianised representation of Set, Horus, and Resheph. Yet another combines two conventional scenes, the priest leading a worshipper before a deity (Babylonian), a king slaying a kneeling enemy (Egyptian).[1] In the presence of such fusion the problem becomes more complex. If, in the Greek age, it is found that Adonis and Osiris or Astarte of Byblos and Isis resembled each other so closely that it was sometimes difficult to determine which deity was being celebrated, the relation between the Baalath of Byblos and Hathor, or between Shamash and Amon-Re could have been equally embarrassing in our period. In fact, as Palestine continues to be brought into line with other lands the task of determining *specific* external influences becomes more intricate.

Finally, whatever was the true effect of the early Babylonian supremacy, both Palestine and Syria, when not controlled by Egypt, were influenced by the northern power of Mitanni and by the Hittites who preserve distinctive features

[1] See (*a*), Sellin, *Tell Ta'annek*, fig. 22, pp. 27 *sq.*, 105 (Vincent, *Canaan*, fig. 117, p. 170 *sq.*); (*b*) Winckler, *Altorient. Forschungen*, iii. p. 177 *sq.*; and (*c*) E. J. Pilcher, *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, xxiii. p. 362.

of their own. According to Professor Sayce most of the seals we have been noticing are Syrian modifications of the Babylonian type, and 'the more strictly archæological evidence of Babylonian influence upon Canaan is extraordinarily scanty.'[1] It is obvious that one must allow for the direct influence exerted upon the religious conditions from a quarter of which very little is known as yet. The fact that Babylonian was used in Palestine and among the Hittite peoples clearly does not allow sweeping inferences. Indeed, so far from the script or language having been imposed from without, the people of Mitanni apparently borrowed the cuneiform script and adapted it to their own language; while, in the Amarna Tablets, the native tongue of Palestine and Syria has left a distinct impress upon the Babylonian.[2] This individuality repeats itself in Palestinian pottery, which has neither originality of concept nor fertility of resource. But it has vigour and vitality, and has not developed into the superior art with which it came into contact. In general the archæological evidence shows very

[1] A. H. Sayce, *Archaeology of the Cuneiform Inscriptions* (London, 1907), pp. 151 *sq.*

[2] For Mitanni, see Sayce, *op. cit.*, p. 167; and for the dialect of the Amarna letters, Zimmern, *Keilinschr. u. d. Alte Test.*, p. 651.

clearly that Palestine was not absorbed by Babylonian culture, still less by that of Egypt.[1]

Conclusion.—Recent research gives us a glimpse of the Religion of Ancient Palestine which becomes more distinct as it is found to be in general harmony with Oriental religions. The picture, as we see it, is neither Egyptian nor Babylonian, and if the latter colours it, this was inevitable, partly through the still obscure relations under the First Babylonian Dynasty, partly (though indirectly) through the influence of the northern peoples, and again partly because both (as opposed to Egypt) are Semitic. The picture, nevertheless, has distinctive traits of its own. By the side of sacred places of cult and rites often cruel and gross appear those indications of loftier elements which prove that we have no mere inchoate nature-worship. This co-existence need cause no surprise. The institutions which combine to make civilisation do not necessarily move at the same rate or in parallel lines, either with each other or with the progress of religious thought. A variety of stages of development —such as can be observed in a single province of modern India—could have been easily found amid

[1] Cp. Vincent, *op. cit.*, p. 341 (also p. 439 and note 1).

conflicting political groups, or in the presence of foreign mercenaries or settlers. One may also assume that then, as now, there were the usual contrasts between the exposed sea-ports and the small inland townships, between the aristocracy and the peasantry, between the settled agriculturists and the roaming sons of the desert.

The fundamental religious conceptions have from time to time been elevated and ennobled by enlightened minds; but what European culture was unable to change in the age of Greek and Roman supremacy, influences of Oriental origin could not expel. Official cults, iconoclastic reforms, new positive religions have left the background substantially unaltered, and the old canvas still shows through the coatings it has received.

Our evidence has taken us down through the age of Egyptian supremacy, which can be traced to the time of Ramses III., if not to the days of Wenamon and Zakarbaal (1100 B.C.). With the decay of Egypt we reach the close of a period which corresponds broadly to that wherein Israelite history has placed the Patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, and the Judges. The picture which the external sources furnish was not effaced at a stroke. But the transformation from Egypt's suzerainty to an independent Israelite monarchy,

from the polytheism of the Amarna age to the recognition of a single God does not belong to these pages. The rise of Yahweh as the national God, and the development of conceptions regarding his nature must be sought in the native Israelite records themselves, and in such external evidence as the future may produce. Our task is finished when we point out that the external (archæological) evidence does not reveal that hiatus which would have ensued had there been a dislocation of earlier conditions by invading Israelite tribes; earlier forms are simply developed, the evolution is a progressive one.[1]

[1] Cp. R. A. S. Macalister, 'Excavation of Gezer,' *Quarterly Statements*, 1904, p. 123; 1907, p. 203; Sellin, *op. cit.*, p. 102; *id.*, *Der Ertrag der Ausgrabungen in Orient für die Erkenntnis der Entwicklung der Religion Israels* (Leipzig, 1905), pp. 33, 36 *sq.*, 39 *sq.*, see, in general, Vincent, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 *sq.*, 147 *sqq.*, 199-204, 225, 345, 352 *sq.*, 463 *sq.*, and S. A. Cook, *English Historical Review*, 1908, pp. 325 *sq.*

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For those unacquainted with modern comparative study in the field of religion, one of the most serviceable introductory books is J. A. Macculloch's *Comparative Theology* (Churchman's Library, London, 1902).

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

THE following dates are based upon the latest researches, but are to be regarded as provisional. Some Biblical dates are added for comparison, those marked with an asterisk follow the margin of the Authorised Version.

FIRST BABYLONIAN DYNASTY (the 'Khammurabi age') between . . .	2060-1800 B.C.
TWELFTH EGYPTIAN DYNASTY, began about	2000.
Abram enters Canaan	1921*.
Descent of Jacob into Egypt . . .	1706*.
Hyksos invasion of Egypt, about . .	1680.
EIGHTEENTH EGYPTIAN DYNASTY . .	1580-1350.
Thutmose III.	1500.
Exodus of Israel	1491*.
Invasion of Palestine	1451*.
Amenhotep III.	1411.
Amenhotep IV. (Ikhnaton). . . .	1375.
NINETEENTH EGYPTIAN DYNASTY . .	1350-1200.
Sety I.	1320.
Ramses II. (? Pharaoh of the oppression, Exod. i. 11)	1310.
Merneptah (? Pharaoh of the Exodus; defeats Israel in Palestine) . .	1244.
TWENTIETH EGYPTIAN DYNASTY . .	1200-1090.
Ramses III. (first mention of Philistines) .	1200-1169.
Ramses XII. (? age of Eli)	1118.
Tiglath-pileser I., about	1100.
Saul, King of Israel (? 1025) . . .	1095*.
David, King of Judah (? 1010) . . .	1056*.
Solomon, about	970.

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